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ABSTRACT

Six communities engaged in planning processes to improve vocational programming for students with handicapping conditions. The collaborative efforts involved the schools, community agencies, and employers in recommending strategies for change. This report is based on a study of the six collaborative planning projects 1 year after their completion. They took place in Decatur, Illinois; Portland, Maine; Bedford, Massachusetts; Oxford, Massachusetts; St. Paul, Minnesota; and a group of three communities associated with the Chester County Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania. Part I introduces the school-to-work transition problem and describes the contexts for action presented by the six communities. Guidelines for taking stock of community context are offered to help others develop similar problem-solving and planning processes. Part II focuses on the six sites and their processes, products, and outcomes. Part III moves beyond the projects to examine programs and issues affecting the preparation of youth for jobs. It offers a typology for examining programs in light of the ultimate goals of competitive employment and integration of graduates into adult life, and identifies agendas for action at the federal, state, and local levels. (JDD)

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A Six-Site Study of School-Community Collaboration

Human Services Development Institute
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June, 1985

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Preparing Handicapped Youth For Jobs

A Six-Site Study of School-Community Collaboration

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Photographs

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About This Book

Blow on a single dandelion puff and the seeds will take root throughout the field. Between 1981 and 1983 six communities engaged in planning processes whose focus was improving vocational programming for students with handicapping conditions. These collaborative efforts were unique in that they involved community agencies and employers with the schools to recommend strategies for change. A school administrator in one of the communities provided the dandelion analogy. Now, several years later, he still sees the seeds of improvement resulting from the initial planning effort. For example an employer on his advisory committee is sponsoring the use of his hospital as a work experience site for special students.

This book is based on a study of the six collaborative planning projects one year after their completion. They took place in Decatur, Illinois; Portland, Maine; Bedford, Massachusetts; Oxford, Massachusetts; St. Paul, Minnesota; and a group of three communities associated with the Chester County Intermediate Unit in Pennsylvania. Its overall goal is to draw from experience in the six communities insights that can help others develop collaborative groups to engage in similar problem-solving and planning. But this book goes beyond an examination of the collaborative planning process. It includes a description of some of the changes that resulted and the kinds of vocational programming schools are offering. The intent is practical rather than academic: to offer readers guidance in developing collaborative groups and in analyzing and improving their own vocational programs and transitional services plans.

Part I introduces the school-to-work transition problem and describes the contexts for action presented by the six communities. We found that sites shared a similar range of problems and used a similar collaborative planning approach. However, given differences in the economic, social and school contexts, they targeted varying types of solutions. The end of this section offers guidelines for taking stock of community context.

Part II focuses on the six sites and their processes, products and outcomes. Products are defined as those activities and publications completed during the grant period. Outcomes are the short-run changes effectuated one year after their projects expired.

Part III moves beyond the projects to examine programs and issues affecting the preparation of youth for jobs. It offers a typology for examining programs in light of the ultimate goals of competitive employment and integration of graduates into adult life and identifies agendas for action at the federal, state and local levels.

Part I

Context for Action

What's Ahead. . .

Young people with handicapping conditions have never fared well in the job market.

J.T., a multiply-handicapped young man with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, walks with forearm crutches as an assist. He has severe speech and hearing limitations. After graduation his parents moved him into a group home so he can live with his peers, but his only daily activities are social. The rehabilitation agency considers him too severely disabled to have job potential.

R. L., a nice looking 16-year-old started falling behind her classmates in grade two. She was held back in grade four because her reading scores were so low. Considered mentally retarded, she was placed in a special class for part of the day. It was there she was diagnosed as having dyslexia. The learning disability impaired her ability to read and thus succeed in academic subjects although her intelligence is normal.

B.P. has been involved with the law since the age of 13 when he was first picked up for shoplifting. He is persistently truant from school, claiming it has nothing to offer him. His petty crimes have not yet warranted incarceration but he is headed down a path of no return if a program catering to disaffected young people combining both work experience and academic training is not devised.

These kinds of young people were in the minds and hearts of school personnel who worked for a year with employers and agencies to determine how schools can better prepare such youth for jobs and what roles agencies and employers should play.

As a result of their efforts J. T. is receiving training in horticulture. Though he will never be financially self-sufficient, his days are spent productively working with plants. R. L. has plans to go to community college where special help is available to students with low reading skills. A learning disabilities coordinator has arranged for students unable to take notes to record lectures and for student volunteers to record text book material.

B. P. has secured employment at an electronics plant where he began working three hours a day while still in high school. Early exposure to the work world through a special agreement with the employer, coupled with daily support from the school, helped B. P. develop longer-term goals and stabilize his behavior.

The book begins with a discussion of the reasons that the schools' role in vocational preparation has received focused attention in the 1980's. The single chapter in Part I also describes the six project sites and the areas they targeted for action planning: information and awareness; curriculum and instruction; and organization and administration.

Chapter 1

The School-to-Work Transition

Transition Problems

After School, What?

Passage of the landmark Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) in 1975 cast into law the national policy that handicapped young people have the right to a free, appropriate public education. All states must provide services to handicapped students through age 17. Twenty-four mandate services through age 21 if the students have not graduated from high school, and many others permit local schools to serve youth through age 21. At that point, students either graduate or "age-out" and the legal responsibility of the school ends. Ready or not, the handicapped youth must move from school to life and work in the community--or to whatever the times after school may hold.

Senior year is usually marked by celebrations of "Commencement" of a period that promises expanded opportunities--for further education, for competitive employment, for independent living. But for many of the 300,000 young people graduating in 1985 from special education programs in the United States life after school promises none of these. For handicapped youth all too often the end of high school means curtailment of supportive services and deprivation of opportunities to live and work in the mainstream of society.

The school-to-work transition is difficult for people, as statistics on youth unemployment attest. For those with handicapping conditions, the problems are compounded: they must confront not only stiff competition for employment but also the host of challenges presented by living in communities where housing, transportation, and services are not geared to their needs and where negative attitudes are common inside and outside the workplace. At a time when support systems are particularly important, the right to appropriate and coordinated services ends.

Prospects for gainful employment are bleak. Only 40 percent of mentally and physically disabled adults are employed as compared with 73 percent of their non-disabled peers (Levitan and Taggart, 1977). Of those employed, 85 percent earn less than $7,000 a year and 52 percent less than $2,000 (Bowe, 1980). It is estimated that at the end of secondary school a handicapped student has less than a 50 percent chance of being employed (Harrison et al., 1979). In this situation we are all losers: young men and women lose hard-earned skills, opportunities for social interaction, and hope for the dignity of independent living; families lose by assuming increased burdens for stay-at-home dependents; citizens lose through long-term demands on the public purse and loss of revenue from a group of potential taxpayers.

Unfortunately the situation is not new. Handicapped students have always fared worse in the job market. Why then the emphasis on vocational needs and transitional programs in the 1980's?

Focus on Transition, Why Now?

Contributing factors include shifts in the numbers and ages of special education students in schools, the deinstitutionalization movement, and the concomitant sharpening of advocacy agendas on policies that promote competitive employment and independent living.

Increased numbers and program exposure. As a result of the success of PL 94-142 in identifying and serving handicapped children, both the total numbers in special education programs and the duration of program exposure of older students have increased steadily. Since the initial child count in 1976-77, numbers of handicapped children served nationally have increased 16 percent even while the total school-age population has decreased steadily. Moreover, as beneficiaries of a decade of investment in special education programs move through the school system, those who graduate or age-out now have been exposed to a full cycle of special education opportunities. Understanding of student potential has grown and with it rising expectations for post-school life.

Deinstitutionalization. Beginning in the early 1970's we have witnessed implementation of deinstitutionalization policies. With the recognition that life in institutions at the least is a severe deprivation of stimulation and freedom and at the worst dehumanizing and abusive, Congress introduced "least restrictive" environment as a criterion for all special education placements and treatment. As a result, many people have been moved from

hospitals and residential centers to homes and communities. These young people are more visible and their needs for education and training have been made a responsibility of the school systems in which they reside.

Advocacy. A natural concomitant of deinstitutionalization is the movement for independent living. Groups of parents, professionals, and others have sharpened their advocacy of handicapped rights to emphasize the right to engage in competitive employment and independent living, and the right to community services that support these goals. All of these factors bring increasing attention to bear on the quality of secondary level programs and their appropriateness in light of the challenges of transition to post-school life.

Federal Initiatives

In the 1970's several major pieces of federal legislation affirmed a national policy that the right to learn and the right to work is as binding for disabled people as for those who are not.* With the turn of the decade initiatives were mounted by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education (OSERS) to stimulate improvement of secondary education to support the transition from school to work. Among them was a renewed emphasis on community collaborative planning.

While considerable responsibility and opportunity lie with schools to prepare youth for transition, schools cannot and should not address the needs alone. Schools support only one side of the bridge to post-school life: building that bridge calls for collaborative efforts by schools and communities together. Hence the importance of re-examining the roles of schools and communities in relation to handicapped youth, and ways of increasing productive collaboration between them. Involvement of community agencies, employers and schools in building transition bridges might be considered "helpful or desirable" for youth in general; for handicapped youth such a partnership may be more than just nice if you can get it. It may well be a necessary condition for independent living in the community--the avowed commitment of national policy.

*See Appendix A for summaries of key legislation, and Chapter 7 for discussion of federal initiatives in the 1980's.

School-Community Projects (1981-83). In this general context of heightened awareness of human needs and challenges to action, several state and local education agencies have made efforts to reform secondary programming for handicapped students. Supported by grants from OSERS over an 18-month period between 1981 and 1983, six communities around the country completed projects designed to "strengthen community involvement in the review, analysis and improvement of secondary school programs for handicapped students" (Grant announcement). Each community developed advisory groups bringing leaders from business, industry and service agencies into a planning process with the schools. The groups identified planning priorities and developed action strategies—all to the end of improving secondary (particularly vocational) programs and building bridges to post-school life. These community enterprises and their outcomes are the focus of this book.

Studying The Six-Site Experience (1983-84)

During the year following completion of the community projects, the Human Services Development Institute, University of Southern Maine, conducted a study of the collaborative action-planning undertaken in the six sites. We assembled, reviewed and analyzed documents generated by each of the six projects; conducted 100 telephone and in-person interviews; completed site visits to four communities (St. Paul, Minnesota; Oxford, Massachusetts; Decatur, Illinois; and Portland, Maine); and analyzed and interpreted resulting data. Our investigation was guided by these questions:

- How were the advisory groups created and activated?
- How were problems defined and prioritized?
- What planning strategies were developed to address the problems?
- Were they implemented and, if so, with what effects?
- Above all, what can be learned from the experience of these communities for others to build upon?

In the chapters that follow, we will share insights derived from examining the projects and reflecting upon their experiences. The overall intention is practical rather than academic: to draw from six diverse communities some understandings about processes for developing school-community collaboration and about planning and programs which enhance the school-to-work transition.

As the study progressed, we became increasingly convinced that, while there are general principles that can guide action to improve collaboration and programs, no single best solution fits all cases. There is need to balance general understandings of processes, strategies, and models with sensitivity to features of the local context and then adopt, adapt or invent approaches which promote program improvement. This theme of action in context, which recurs throughout the text, was not predefined; rather it emerged as we listened, observed, analyzed, and reflected on the experiences within the projects. With this in mind, we identify some patterns of commonality and diversity across projects and then discuss characteristics of the six sites.

Six School-Community Collaboration Projects

As Figure 1.1 suggests, the six communities shared a common purpose and identified similar generic problem areas. However, they differed in their own community context, in the priorities they established and the strategies they adopted.

Figure 1.1

Commonality and Diversity in Six School-Community Collaboration Projects

Commonality	
Purpose:	To develop a collaborative process "to strengthen community involvement in the review, analysis and improvement of secondary school programs for handicapped students."
Problem Areas:	• Information and awareness. • Curriculum and instruction. • Organization, administration, collaboration.
Diversity	
Community Context:	Economic, social, school differences.
Priorities:	Differences in problem focus and strategies identified to address problems.
Advisory Group Strategies:	• Recommendations approach. • Direct services approach. • Advocacy.

Commonalities

Commonality of Purpose. Projects shared a common purpose: to develop a collaborative planning process to improve secondary vocational programs for handicapped students. The ultimate, although not always explicit, goal was to ease the transition from school to work.

In all sites the planning process involved school personnel, employers and agency representatives. Each project group pursued a set of activities that generally fell into three stages, described in Chapter 2.

Commonality of Problems. Projects shared common problem areas as they came to be defined: 1) problems with attitudes and perceptions about handicapped students and their employability; 2) problems with the curriculum and instruction not being oriented towards vocational training; 3) problems with the organization and administration of programs including lack of collaboration with community agencies and employers. These broad problem categories are expanded in Figure 1.2. The problem areas are common, interrelated and even predictable, given the complexities of inter-organizational coordination. They may be exacerbated by features of the contemporary social, political or economic climate of a particular setting.

Diversity of Contexts for Action

There was significant diversity in the communities themselves, the social and economic contexts in which they were operating and their history of collaborative planning. These variations led to differences in focus and strategies.

Different Settings. The six sites varied widely in size and setting, in the kinds of programs that were operating as they embarked on the projects in 1981-82, in the extent of prior school-community collaborative efforts, and in the numbers and kinds of secondary-age handicapped students served. Together they reflect the diversity of schooling arrangements found across the country.

Figure 1.2

Major Problem Areas in Preparing Handicapped Youth for Work and Independent Living

Information and Awareness. Inadequacies in knowledge and attitudes of teachers, employers, parents, students, community agency personnel in one or more of the following:

- the needs and capabilities of handicapped youth.
- existing programs and services.
- requirements and opportunities in the labor market.
- related inhibiting attitudes.

Curriculum and Instruction. Such deficiencies as:

- insufficient attention to skills for jobs and independent living.
- limited options in vocational education/training.
- lack of vocational assessment and IEP's without vocational/career education components.
- few options for hands-on learning in real-work settings.

Organization and Administration. Such weaknesses as:

- poor linkages within schooling system: general education, special education, vocational education. Strained relations with vocational schools.
- limited formal mechanisms for collaborating with agencies and employers.
- inadequate services to support students at work sites (e.g., transportation, tutoring, supervision).
- lack of clarity about locus of responsibility for transitional services.

For example, two small sites, Oxford, Massachusetts and Bedford, Massachusetts, each serve about 75 handicapped students in grades 9-12 in a single high school. In Oxford, a rural community, most graduates directly enter the workforce but the local economic base is meager. In Bedford, a growing suburban community with some offshoots of high technology industry, most high school students are college-bound.

Two other sites, St. Paul, Minnesota, a large midwestern center, and Portland, Maine, a small northeastern city, are single-district metropolitan areas. St. Paul serves over 1300 handicapped youth in six regular high schools while Portland serves about 320 in two, excluding vocational schools. Located in a twin city area, St. Paul is headquarters for several major national firms and has a strong industrial base. Portland, the largest city in Maine,

nonetheless has more limited employment resources. St. Paul has a track record in collaborative planning as well as in providing work experience programs for handicapped youth. St. Paul had experienced a curtailment of vocational rehabilitation services formerly available in the schools, prompting action to strengthen training-employment linkages with business and industry. Portland had been enjoined through a state program review to strengthen vocational offerings for secondary handicapped students.

The final two sites, Decatur, Illinois and Chester County, Pennsylvania are multi-district systems. Decatur, the "soybean capital of the world," is a city school system which serves students from 13 small districts in two neighboring counties. Chester County Intermediate Unit is part of the Pennsylvania system of regional units and serves 12 independent school districts. Decatur is essentially a blue collar community which is international headquarters for four major companies. Chester County is the home of both steel mills and insurance companies. Decatur has a long history of special education programs, dating back to the 1920's. At present vocational services are provided in three high schools and a vocational school. In Chester County three of the twelve districts (Coatesville, Oxford and Unionville-Chadds Ford), representing typical urban and suburban communities in the region, participated in the project.

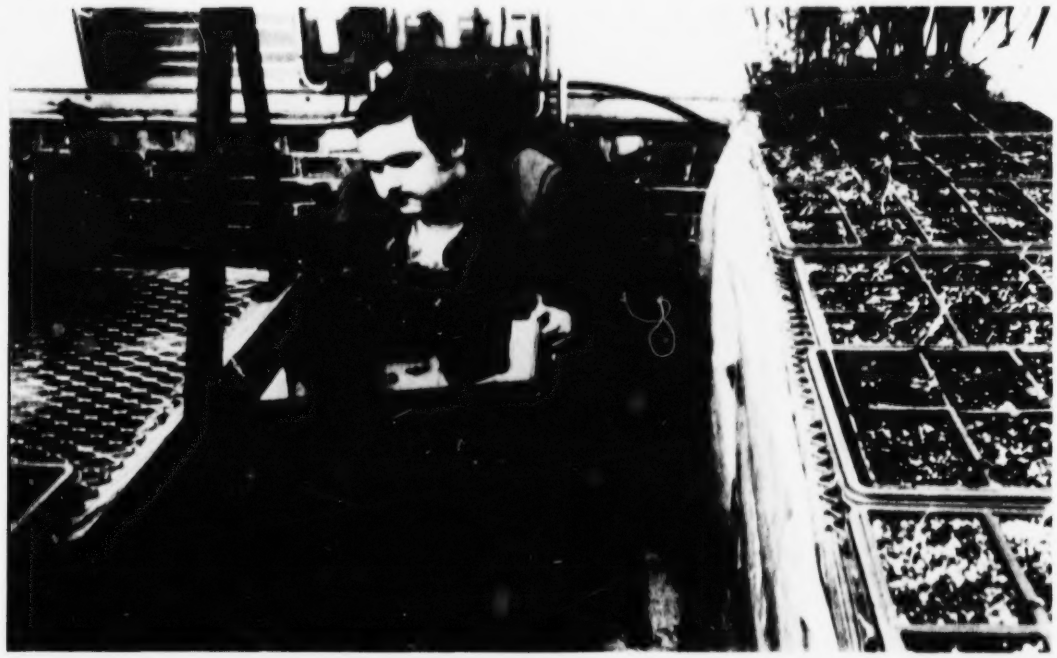


Figure 1.3

Distribution of Handicapped Students, Grades 9–12, by Category in Six Sites
1983–84 School Year
(Percents rounded)

	Bedford MA	Oxford MA	Portland ME	Decatur IL	Chester Co. PA	St. Paul MN
TOTAL NUMBER	76	76	246	309	1086	1338
% Mentally Retarded	9	32	13	42	28	34
% Learning Disabled	77	61	24	40	34	37
% Emotionally Disturbed	10	7	46	5	3	21
% Other	4	3	16	12	42	8

Source: Summary of data reported by project sites.

Student Populations. Regarding the handicapping conditions of students served by the sites, there was considerable diversity. We cannot tell if the variations represented actual conditions or were functions of the way systems diagnose and categorize students. At least one district intimated that parents find it more palatable for their children to be called learning disabled rather than mentally retarded, and this attitude may influence the classifications. Figure 1.3 displays summary data from six sites. In each the number of students identified as handicapped increased between the 1980-81 and the 1983-84 school years.

Based on data reported to us by sites, the percent of students with a primary disability of mental retardation ranged from a low of nine percent in Bedford to a high of 42 percent in Decatur in 1983-4. The category learning disabled ranged from 34 percent in Chester County to 77 percent in Bedford. Similarly, emotionally disturbed had a low of three percent in Chester County and a high of 46 percent in Portland.

While the variations are pronounced, they did not appear to influence the work of the projects. Most sites did not single out a particular category of handicapping condition on which to focus. They tended to treat the question of need for program improvement generally, although ultimately certain programs and services were targeted to one group over another.

Different Sources of Initiative for Projects. Variations in community settings also include a range of institutional or organizational resources available to support special initiatives; for example, when projects were designed:

- The Office of Career Development for special populations at the College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne, located 40 miles from Decatur, had an eight-year tradition of collaboration with the school system and the Macon County-Piatt County Special Education District. Project EXPAND was a joint undertaking of these three groups with the university serving as prime contractor.

- Technical Education Research Centers of Cambridge, Massachusetts had substantial prior experience providing consultation on transitional services and had completed work on a federally-funded project to prepare a handbook on collaborative planning for handicapped programs. Staff members sought Massachusetts sites in which to test the planning model developed in the publication, The Interdependent Community: Collaborative Planning for Handicapped Youth (TERC 1980).

- The Human Services Development Institute of the University of Southern Maine had provided consultant and support services for a variety of federal, state, and local agencies. The Portland Community Leadership Project presented an opportunity for a joint undertaking with the Portland school system which was under state mandate to upgrade vocational programming.

How the projects were initiated affected patterns of leadership between school personnel and consultants. In St. Paul, school people organized the project and defined a limited role for consultants; in Bedford, consultants organized the work and assumed major responsibility for it.

Diversity of Planning Strategies and Activities. Variations in community settings and orientations of project staff influenced priorities for planning in projects. Some groups focused their year's work on developing a set of detailed recommendations for improvement while others launched into developing products and services--products such as curriculum guides and services such as workshops and speakers' bureaus. In all, committee members became advocates for change.

Thus, while all sites recognized the range of interdependent problems to be addressed (Fig. 1.2), each one emphasized particular aspects of problems in information and awareness, curriculum and instruction, or organization and administration. These differences in emphasis are summarized in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4

Priority Areas for Action Planning in Six Sites

Site	Information/Awareness	Curriculum/Instruction	Organization/Administration
Bedford		Identification of characteristics of successful workers	Identification of characteristics of effective school/community cooperation
Chester County I.U.			Design of process for using school and community representatives in reviewing, analyzing and improving current programming and their organizational structure
Decatur	Improved communications among parents, teachers and employers		
Oxford		Identification of work attitudes and skills necessary for students	
St. Paul		Improvement of job training and employment options	Improvement of individual and organizational adjustments in competitive employment settings. Advancement of future planning among community, business, industry, government and public schools.
Portland		Curriculum and staffing changes	Relationships with public agencies, business, and regional vocational centers.

The analysis of project experience tells us that it is important for communities to be conscious of their choices, and the way they decide to devote resources of time, personnel, and funds to address this problem; and that such choices must be made with a keen sense of local contexts for action. Therefore, throughout the book we suggest guidelines and choices. They are intended to help communities balance alternative considerations in deciding when to adopt, when to adapt and when to invent new ways of acting on problems.

Guidelines: Assessing Community Context

What are the implications of the community context for engaging in collaborative planning? There are many. If a community has no prior history of collaboration, schools, employers and agency personnel may have to spend more time developing trust and educating one another. If the economic base of the community is limited or if unemployment rates are high, it may be harder to get employers to meet with the schools. If, on the other hand, the economy is strong, participants may want to do employment forecasting to make sure people are being trained for the right jobs. If schools are operating in multi-district settings, they may spend considerable time merely contending with relationships among districts. In short, the context can affect the membership of the action planning group, the way problems get defined, the strategies pursued, and the feasibility of their implementation.

Whatever the location, it is important that community planning groups become aware of their contexts for action. They can take stock through the following questions, which also contribute to the first phase of planning.

1. Take stock of the social and economic context

   - What is the nature of the local economy, the patterns of industry and commerce?
   - What is the nature of the job market, the areas with most prospect?
   - What social or economic conditions make it difficult for handicapped youth to find jobs now?

2. Take stock of the existing programs, services and joint efforts

   - What school programs provide vocational training?
   - What services are available in the community; are they accessible to your target group?
   - What strong programs or precedents can be built upon?
   - What advocacy groups can be mobilized?

3. Take stock of the school's organization and information capabilities

   - What is the organizational structure of the school system?
   - How do vocational education, special education and general education relate organizationally?
   - How much information is available about the handicapped group? Is it easily accessible?
   - Is there a systematic way to check progress after graduation?

Part II

Six Projects (1981–83) and Their Outcomes (1983–84)

What's Ahead. . .

Since the purpose of the initial six grant awards was to develop and document a collaborative planning process to address needs for improving secondary, primarily vocational, programming for handicapped students, the advisory group process was a major focus of our study.

The process, of course, was used as a vehicle to identify and address substantive areas of concern, and it generated products in the form of specific recommendations and materials which reflected different overall strategies for program improvement. In the year following completion of the projects, it was possible to identify short-term indicators of impact on the targeted problem areas.

In chapters 2 to 5 we discuss the process, products and short-run outcomes of the six community projects. We also stand back from the specifics of individual sites to interpret the overall experience and identify considerations of general interest.

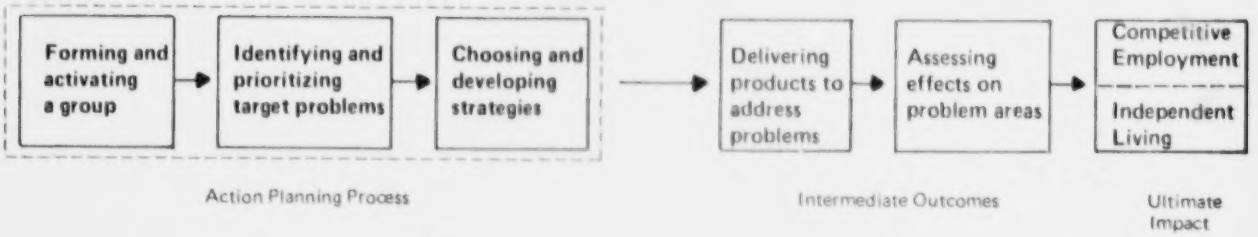
Stages in the Process: A Simple Flow Model

To guide their activities, several sites explicitly adopted or adapted a conceptual framework. St. Paul, for example, adapted Havelock's (1974) "Model for Facilitating Change in Education," with schools playing the role of change agent working in tandem with community members. Oxford and Bedford drew upon the handbook, The Interdependent Community

(TERC, 1980), which elaborates steps for collaborative planning. While sites used varying terminology and procedural steps, all engaged in a process using elements common to most models for facilitating change. Figure 2.1 depicts major steps in the process in a simple flow model which we will re-examine at the end of Part II.

Figure 2.1

From Action-Planning to Work and Independence
A Flow Model



The advisory group process is the beginning of a long and complex road towards the ultimate goals of work and independence. There are no quick fixes or guarantees, as the sites themselves discovered. Each stage in the planning process involves making choices and decisions that affect both the collaborative process and its outcomes. The discussion that follows draws upon experience at project sites to highlight some of the options and offer suggestions for other communities that wish to use a collaborative planning process.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the action planning process (first three steps in the flow model). We begin with a discussion of creating and developing an action planning group. Readers impatient to get to specifics of what projects did may want to look at Figure 3.3 (page 35) first, and then come back to the discussion of developing a group.

Chapter 2

Developing a Collaborative Planning Group

Advisory committees at project sites all had common characteristics: they were newly formed groups; they had a specific purpose to accomplish in a one-year timeline; group members were volunteers, representing different institutions and having different degrees of familiarity with each other. To address their goal they had to deal with two major agendas: 1) organizing an effective working group, and 2) producing concrete results.

Structure and Membership

Committee Size and Representation

The number of members in the core groups ranged from 13 to 19. Although some sources on group process would advocate an even smaller core, the sites found the numbers viable and necessary to include the desired categories of people. The two small sites used a single group throughout the life of the project, whereas the four larger ones expanded membership through subcommittees during the strategy development phase. One person commented, "We found expansion of the group gave us security when some members were absent. However, you had to be careful that the new members were properly oriented so they wouldn't waste the time of others."

Balancing membership required attention to several variables. Within the schooling system itself there is special education, vocational education and general education all of which warranted voice. In the schools' relationship with the community, there are employers, service agencies, parents and former students. In addition, the school has political ties to its own

local board and to people at the state level, be they administrators, elected or appointed officials. Some sites tried to balance male/female representation, youth/senior citizens, race and large/small business. Figure 2.2 illustrates the balancing act entailed in formulating the group.

Figure 2.2

Selecting the Advisory Committee
A Balancing Act

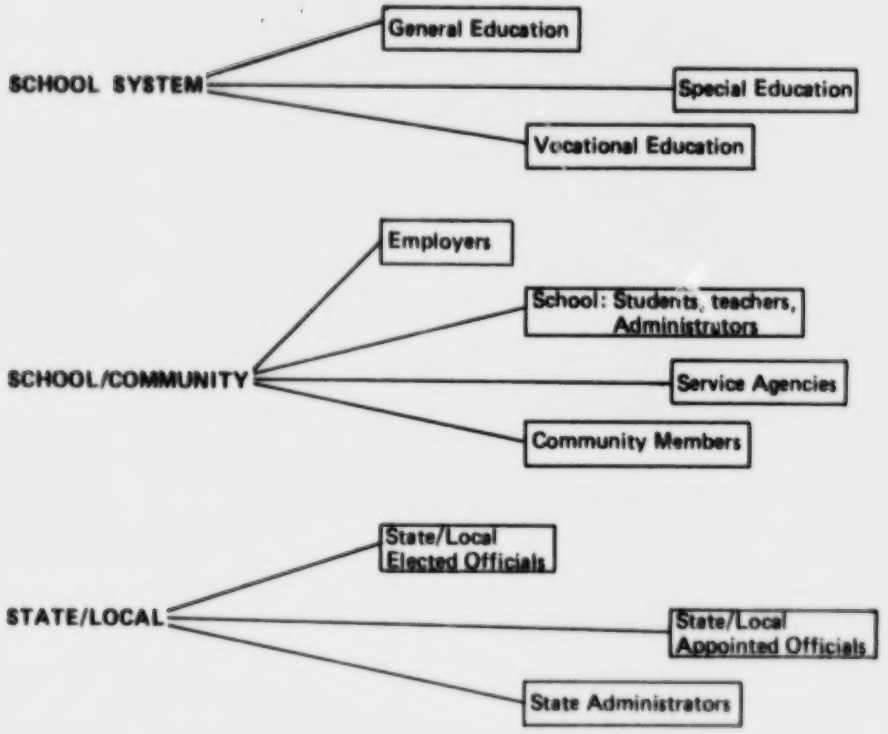


Figure 2.3 shows how the sites resolved membership. School personnel were heavily represented throughout. Perspectives from school administration, vocational education, and special education were included. There was often a state as well as local voice. Employers participated in all cases; noticeably the site starting with most direct focus on employment had the largest representation and was able to sustain their involvement throughout. By contrast, a site which placed less emphasis on employer contributions found some representatives dropping out. The category of 'community members' tended to be represented largely by parents, and in

Figure 2.3

Membership of Community Leadership Groups
By Category and Geographic Site

Category	Bedford	Portland	Decatur	St. Paul	Chester Co.	Oxford
School:						
Local	4	7	6	7	5	9
State	1	2	2	1	2	2
Community:						
Local	4	2	2	4	5	2
State		3	1	1	2	0
Business/ Industry:						
Local	8	4	3	6	5	0
Totals	17	18	14	19	19	13

some cases students. Aside from an occasional representative of the state-level vocational rehabilitation agency, state and local service agencies were under-represented (as indeed was the case in federal proposal guidelines).

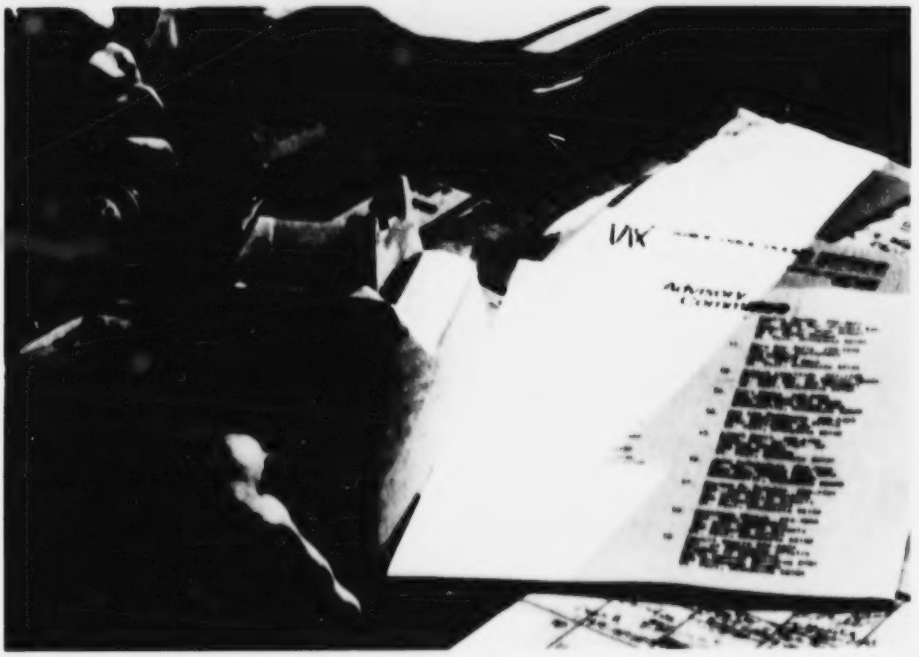
Selection and Orientation of Members

Procedures for selecting members varied across sites. At one, they were identified in the project proposal; at another, team members used brainstorming to generate a list of agencies, organizations, employers and school personnel. Some sites used a small cadre of initial members to identify additional ones.

Whatever the variations, three primary criteria were used:

- Professional competence and prestige in the community.
- Personal commitment and availability.
- Power to influence decision-making within a significant organization.

Additional considerations at some sites included cooperativeness and ability to function well in a group, and representation of a wide range of personal, professional, and ethnic characteristics.



Initial communication with members, particularly the pattern and tone of the first meeting, set the stage for future relationships. Sites stressed the importance of:

- Personal contact to make members feel wanted. A telephone call to request participation and thoroughly discuss the reason for establishing the committee, the responsibilities of the participant, the advantages of collaborative planning, and the necessary time commitment.

- Written communication to clarify purposes and expectations. A follow-up letter on sponsoring agency stationery which includes: the goal and purpose of the advisory committee; how the person's involvement will benefit the students and sponsoring educational agency; anticipated outcomes of the person's involvement; and a reiteration of the time commitment.

This mailing could include supplementary materials such as: descriptions of existing programs and services, an abstract of the project, an agenda for the first meeting, and information to assist participants' understanding of the issues and vocational needs of handicapped people.

During the orientation process two types of baseline information were used: student data, including the numbers and types of students with handicapping conditions; and program and service data, including the numbers and types of programs in schools, community and business or industry.

One site included a set of definitions of terms (to eliminate potential confusion) as well as a model cooperative agreement between special education and vocational education (to illustrate possible options). Only one site had available a follow-up study of employment of 1980 graduates.

In addition to the initial communication, of primary importance was the tone of the first meeting. As one group said, "A well planned orientation meeting appears to be essential in getting the project off to a good start and in building enthusiasm among committee members."

The duration and intensity of orientation varied with the setting and history of collaborative action. Sites had to balance the rapid introduction of activities with the opportunity for members to surface concerns and questions. Sites with a sound information base and a history of collaboration can proceed faster, as the example in Figure 2.4 illustrates.

Figure 2.4

Using Data and Formal Technique to Move Process

In its initial proposal, the St. Paul site included a seven-page analysis of data resulting from a follow-up employment study of 1980 graduates. The analysis showed numbers of handicapped students in vocational education, patterns of overuse of work experience for the mildly handicapped and indicators of under-employment upon graduation. In addition, the authors listed problems on which there was staff consensus.

Intensive staff work prior to the first meeting of the advisory group generated a stem question used to focus discussion: "What can the St. Paul Public Schools, in cooperation with local business, industry and government, do to improve existing vocational programs and expand career entry options for handicapped youth?"

Having distributed the analytic study in advance, the staff used the stem question and the nominal group technique* at the first Advisory Committee meeting to arrive at first project priorities and identify related issues.

Source: Site documents from St. Paul Public Schools, Minnesota

Note: * See Figure 3.2 for technique description.

Staff at one site, with little prior history of collaboration, felt in retrospect that they had overestimated committee members' understanding of the overall direction and focus of the project. They would recommend a series of orientation meetings and recurrent affirmation of goals and intended outcomes throughout the project. Interviews at another site emphasized the

need for representatives of different agencies to understand each others' frames of action and potential contributions if there is to be any real collaboration on problems. This mutual education process took substantial time in early meetings.

In contrast, staff at a site with a strong history of collaboration emphasized keeping the action moving, maximizing the productivity of participant time, and assuring that people saw their contributions as promoting recognizable improvements.

Schedules and Staffing

Typically, project schedules called for monthly meetings. One committee, however, completed its business in four sessions, while another worked ten months to establish its objectives.

Any group with volunteer membership faces uncertainties about the division of labor between staff and members. In designating roles, all sites employed a combination of school staff and consultants; and, in every site, consultants assumed responsibility for handling group process.

Within this pattern, however, there were wide variations. In the two small sites, consultants played a dominant role -- with the attendant risk of lessening the commitment of school personnel. Elsewhere, school personnel assumed major responsibilities, at the risk of school dominance. Any committee with volunteer membership also faces dilemmas about distribution of responsibility. On one hand, busy people who donate their time have a right to have it used in a time-saving way. On the other, direct engagement in tasks builds a sense of commitment among participants. Staffing patterns require careful attention to the balance of power and authority between school personnel, consultants and the members themselves.

Similarly, the structure and pace of the work requires balance. With the common experience of winter storms or summer holidays disrupting schedules, sites nonetheless demonstrated two sharply distinctive working patterns:

- extensive staff work resulting in a limited number of highly focused and efficient sessions to accomplish assigned tasks;
- extensive engagement of participants in such activities as collecting data or developing materials resulting in group ownership of the project and its objectives.

Evidence from the six sites suggests there is no "one best way" to assemble and activate an advisory committee or to select and implement a strategy for action. Among the wide range of reasonable options, each site made choices reflective of specific features of the local context, particularly: the social and economic character of the locale; prior experience with school-agency-business collaboration; expectations, expertise, and priorities of staff and committee members. Analysis of site experiences does, however, reveal patterns and illuminate considerations which can inform decision-making.

Work Agendas

Balancing Maintenance and Task Orientations

The two agendas of the sites -- to establish a viable working group and to carry out a strategy for action -- are integrally related. This can be demonstrated by examining the impact of the size of the group and the role assigned to members. The experience of the sites confirms, for example, that group cohesiveness (maintenance orientation) and productivity (task orientation) are both high when:

- the group is homogeneous and small (fewer than 10); and
- emphasis is placed on tapping the resources and expertise of members.

The majority moved towards these optimal conditions by using subcommittees to reduce the size of the original group and engaging members in activities such as identification or prioritization of needs.

In different sites, however, and at different project stages, different weightings for maintenance and task were apparent. As Figure 2.5 shows, several indicators help to distinguish the priority assigned to either group maintenance or group task at stages in the work: group membership, orientation, staffing, meetings and group process.

Figure 2.5

Indicators of Priority Assigned to Maintenance or Task

	High Task Priority	High Maintenance Priority
Membership	1. Fixed for the duration of the activity	1. Open to new members
	2. Predominantly from single category (i.e., school personnel)	2. Balanced representation
Orientation	3. Pre-defined information base	3. Search by members for additional information
Meetings	4. Limited number of meetings	4. Additional meetings
Staffing	5. Major responsibilities assumed by staff (setting agendas, defining tasks, doing work)	5. Major responsibilities assumed by committee
Group Process	6. Tightly structured, formal techniques used	6. Loosely structured, informal techniques used
Leadership	7. Strong central control over group.	7. Less central control. Leadership dispersed in subgroups.

The central factor emerging from these indicators is level of leadership control--reflected in membership stability, the power of the given information base, the influence of staff, and the orchestration of interactions. Different degrees of control reveal different priorities assigned to maintenance and task:

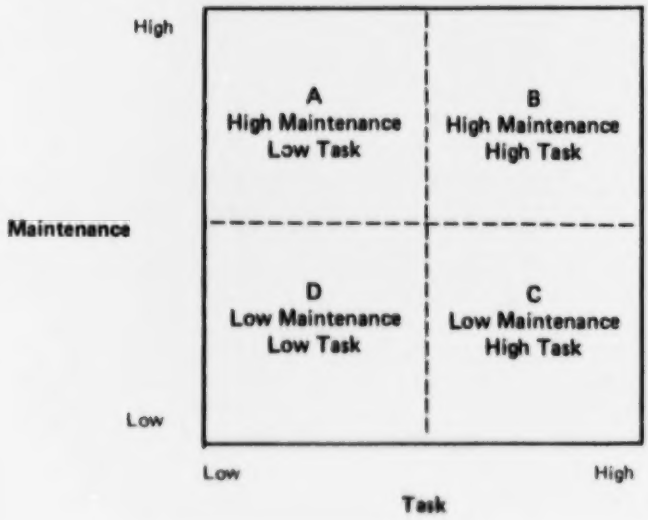
- the tighter the control over the group, the more emphasis on task;
- the looser the control, the more emphasis on group maintenance.

By the nature of the undertaking, no project could be only task- or maintenance-oriented. Furthermore, given the importance of the local context, no site could construct a "magic formula" for success.

Figure 2.6 presents a maintenance/task typology reflecting patterns noted in the work of advisory committees. During initial stages of organizing a committee and identifying priorities, advisory committees reflected either a Low Task/High Maintenance priority (A) or a High Task/Low Maintenance orientation (C). By the time committees had reached the stages of identifying priorities and implementing a planning strategy (ranging from Month 2 to Month 10), adjustments in both approaches tended to move the groups towards High Task/High Maintenance (B).

Figure 2.6

Group Maintenance and Task Orientation



For high maintenance groups (Type A) which had been emphasizing process over task, typical adjustments included specifying the information base, assigning more responsibilities to staff, structuring meetings more tightly. For high task groups (Type C) which had been emphasizing task over group cohesiveness, typical adjustments included adding new members, searching for new information, holding additional meetings for sub-groups, having members assume more responsibilities, structuring meetings more loosely.

Guidelines: Advisory Group Functioning

From the common characteristics and unique features of the six sites we draw a set of guidelines on advisory group functioning.

1. Size and Representation

   - "Small is beautiful," but given the numbers of educators, agency personnel and employers with a pertinent interest in transitional services, difficult to achieve. Sub-committees provide a useful way to broaden the base of participation.

   - Careful screening can help guard against over- representation of school personnel and under- representation of state and agency personnel or employers.

2. Selection and Orientation of Members

   - Criteria for selecting members include professional competence and prestige; personal commitment and availability; and power to influence decision-making in one or more significant organizations. To be effective, the member must act as a liaison and advocate outside the committee.

   - Initial communications with members about the nature of the project, the purposes of the committee, and their intended roles and responsibilities constitute a crucial first step.

   - The stronger the initial data base presented to members (particularly follow-up on graduates), the easier it is to identify needs and priorities.

3. Scheduling and Staffing

   - Even the most carefully planned meeting schedule can be disrupted by storms, illness, vacations. However, it is important to schedule meetings well in advance and obtain commitments to attend. Alternates not familiar with the project may prove to be disruptive. Firmness and flexibility in scheduling must go hand-in-hand.

   - Balance carefully the roles of staff and committee members, with special attention to maximizing use of members' expertise while avoiding overburden.

4. Meetings and Process

- Don't underestimate the amount of attention and time required to plan and implement the "process" of a new group--the time to build communication and trust that, in turn, will yield accomplishments.

- A site which aims to develop a group takes on, in effect, a project within a project with tasks applicable to the overall activities of the group as well as to each session. These tasks follow a typical model:

  a) establish priorities for group maintenance and/or group task -- recognizing trade-offs inherent in each;

  b) assess the needs of the group -- the background, experience and priorities of individuals;

  c) select group process techniques appropriate for the people and the agenda (see Figure 3.3), and monitor the results.

- Where subcommittees with additional members are used, plan for meetings with the entire group to communicate and share ideas. Short social activities, for example informal meetings with rolls and coffee, should be scheduled initially so participants can begin the crucial networking process.

- Approaches to group problem-solving which emphasize individual and group development of skills in data collection and analysis have an educative function which represents a long-term investment in the group. For a single-focus, one-year project, these may consume so much time that the group cannot adequately accomplish its task.

- Tightly structured sessions using sophisticated techniques, accomplish their purpose when there is meticulous preparation of materials and careful directives. However, this style locks control in the hands of those managing the process. It limits opportunities for a new group to build sufficient rapport to shape its direction. Ironically, this highly task-oriented approach can be perceived by some participants as "too process-oriented."

- Structured, but less formal, sessions may contribute to the development of group "ownership". It is difficult, however, to judge beforehand what new members need to know -- about each other and about the project -- and how much time will be required to build cohesiveness sufficient for the group to influence

direction. One project manager observed: "... when local members are not involved in the conceptual development of the project, they are reluctant to assume direction of it when asked to do so... It appears that more time was needed than previously thought to transfer project direction."

Chapter 3

Prioritizing and Accomplishing Tasks

The sites all shared the array of problems referenced in the initial federal announcement creating the six projects. Recall that these (summarized in Fig. 1.2 above) fall into three major groups:

deficiencies in information and awareness

inadequacies in curriculum and instruction and

deficiencies in organization and collaboration

However, agreeing that these are important areas is a far cry from defining specific targets for work. Advisory groups spent varying amounts of time identifying priority areas. They also exhibited different patterns in their overall strategic approach to tasks and in the use of techniques to gather and process information. This chapter looks first at techniques -- those used by the groups both to collect data and process information -- and then at the strategies identified.

Data Collection Techniques

Each group spent some time collecting information which would help to complete what Havelock (1974) calls "Diagnosing the Problem." Data assembly is a critical dimension of the process. Data are important not only to target planning but also to assess progress once programs are implemented.

Usually advisory group members themselves possessed a wealth of information from their own perspectives. Through their inputs and comments at meetings a very important mutual education process occurred.

In addition, sites typically assembled: (1) data on students, (2) data on school programs and services, (3) data on community and business resources, and (4) data on attitudes and perceptions of students, parents, school staff, community members, and employers.

Since the amount of information available when advisory groups first convened varied considerably, different amounts of time were allocated to data collection. In the site starting with extensive data on student employment, analyses prepared by staff were presented at the first meeting and the group established its objectives at that session. Other sites spent from two to eight months collecting information to supplement the baseline data available to them before framing specific objectives.

Typically, both staff and committee members collected data -- with staff frequently trying to lighten the burden for busy members. Three approaches were used to collect information from outside the groups.

Interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews with employers, parents, and school or agency staff to gather evidence of perceptions and attitudes towards handicapped youth and programs.

Surveys: simple, brief survey instruments to identify knowledge, attitudes, and expectations of employers, parents, and staff.

Expert Consultation: discussions with authorities outside the committee who were knowledgeable in the areas under review.

Figure 3.1 illustrates some of the ways these techniques were used at specific sites.

Figure 3.1

Sample Data Collection Approaches

Interviews

In Decatur, IL. the Committee used its first two meetings to formulate an assessment of needs drawing upon the knowledge and experience of the group itself. While the need for improved communication among parents, teachers and employers emerged as a prime target, the Committee was reluctant to rely on its own perceptions alone. Therefore, the members were provided with a needs assessment instrument to use for interviewing individuals of their choice. This activity served both to support the initial needs identification and to bolster the confidence of the committee in its abilities and resources.

Survey

One site designed an instrument with parallel questions for special education students, their parents and local employers. The findings, which identified a range of work attitudes and skills necessary for obtaining and maintaining employment, were used to develop a new curriculum. Data collected in this site and elsewhere affirmed that employers judge positive work attitudes more important than specific skills.

Expert Consultation

To expand the range of options open to consideration, the Portland Committee scheduled two activities: a teleconference with university faculty knowledgeable about vocational preparation for handicapped persons; and discussions with two representatives from model vocational preparation programs who described how their programs helped mild-to-moderately retarded people move into jobs after high school.

Sources: Documentation from project sites.

Group Process Techniques

Project facilitators drew upon a repertoire of group process techniques to use in varying phases of the process, from identifying needs to building consensus or assessing strategies. These techniques are a way of generating information from within the group and of processing information once collected. They included brainstorming, nominal group technique, and force field analysis and are described, with examples, in Figure 3.2.

Each technique has its advantages, disadvantages and special applicability. Understanding these as well as possessing skills and comfort in their use are all important factors in assuring effectiveness. It is advisable, in any event, to use a variety of problem-solving techniques with groups that meet over extended periods of time; this allows opportunity for open and in-depth discussion of ideas as well as a means of completing tasks.

Figure 3.2

Group Process Techniques Used by Sites

Brainstorming

Members of the group respond to a central question by generating a large number of ideas without evaluating them. Typically the ideas are then grouped. Varying degrees of structure can be used to hone and prioritize them.

Advantage: Allows cross fertilization of ideas among participants

Disadvantage: People with high status or expertise can dominate the discussion, inhibiting a free flow of ideas

Committee Use: Identifying needs, developing a list of program improvement areas, developing strategies

Nominal Group Technique

This highly structured process uses six steps for a group to respond to a carefully constructed lead question:

1. Silent generation of ideas in writing.
2. Round robin recording of ideas.
3. Serial discussion for clarification.
4. Preliminary vote on item importance.
5. Discussion of preliminary vote.
6. Final vote.

Advantage: Allows for broad exploration of a problem, gives each member equal say initially.

Disadvantage: Constrains the refinement and cross-fertilization of ideas because highly structured and formalistic.

Committee Use: At initial meeting to set focus of project activities; later, to define criteria for prioritizing areas for program improvement.

Force Field Analysis

Members of the group identify positive and negative forces acting on a given issue. The group then looks at alternative ways to overcome problems or build on strengths.

Advantage: Pays heed to forces which would inhibit implementation of a desired improvement. Reality-oriented, helps participants remain problem-centered.

Disadvantage: Participants must possess expertise about the social, political and economic dimensions of the problem. Technique lacks procedure for ranking driving forces and constraints on action.

Committee Use: As a tool to analyze recommendations produced by subcommittees.

Sources: Several sites used variations of these techniques. A good evaluative discussion is offered in Project Prove, A Planning Guide, prepared by Saint Paul Public Schools, circa 1983. See also Delbecq, A. L. et al., Group Techniques for Program Planning (Scott, Foresman, 1974) for elaboration of the nominal group process and delphi techniques.

Work Focus — Needs and Strategies

Figure 3.3 provides an overview of the problems (column 1), focus (column 2) and strategies (column 3) identified by each of the sites through their various processes. Particular information gathering and group process techniques used, as discussed above, are shown parenthetically in lighter type.

Figure 3.3

Overview of Principal Problems, Priority Goals, and Advisory Group Strategies in Six Sites

	Principal Problems/Needs	Advisory Group Focus/Action Targets	Advisory Group Strategy/Approach
Portland, ME	• Gaps in curriculum • Weak relationships with agencies, employers, and regional vocational center (Identified by preliminary data provided to committee and subsequent collection of data through interviews by committee members and staff.)	Recommend action to: • Improve curriculum and strengthen staffing • Improve relationships with public agencies • Improve relationships with business • Improve relationships with regional vocational center (Identified by reviewing prior and newly collected data in committee meetings.)	**RECOMMENDATIONS APPROACH** Develop and refine recommendations to the Portland School Committee in the targeted areas. (Formulated through discussions in subcommittee meetings, brought together in final plenary meeting.)
St. Paul, MN	• Limited opportunities for career entry for handicapped students (Identified by prior work of staff in analyzing data on employment and staff perception of problems.) • Need for schools, business and government to cooperate to improve vocational programs and career entry options. (Identified as focal area for discussion at first committee meeting.)	Recommend action to: • Improve job training and employment opportunities • Improve individual and organizational adjustments in competitive employment settings. • Advance future planning among community, business, industry, government and public schools. (Identified by first brainstorming issues then using nominal group techniques to prioritize three out of initial 11 issues at first committee meeting.)	**RECOMMENDATIONS APPROACH** Develop and refine recommendations in three targeted areas. (Recommendations formulated through meetings of expanded subcommittees, using brainstorming, nominal group technique, and force field analysis.)
Oxford, MA	• Gaps in curriculum for the world of work (Identified by staff and committee review of information on current services.)	• Specify curriculum objectives: work attitudes and skills needed by students, and skills needed by students. (Identified by committee during initial meetings.)	**PREPARE AND DISSEMINATE RESOURCE MATERIALS** • Develop a survival handbook • Meet with teachers to introduce materials to classes. (Handbook content developed via questionnaires to employers and families of handicapped people.)
Bedford, MA	• Gaps in curriculum for preparation for world of work (Identified by staff and committee through review of information on current programs.)	• Specify curriculum objectives: optimal characteristics of a successful worker. • Specify effective school/community cooperation. (Identified by committee during initial meetings.)	**PREPARE RESOURCE MATERIALS** • Develop a profile of basic work behaviors and skills required by industry for entry-level employment, job maintenance and promotion. • Develop a community resource listing. (Work skills developed by committee using information gathered on school system, employment opportunities and teacher/student perceptions.)
Decatur, IL	• Absence of good communication among parents, teachers, employers (Identified in first committee meeting by brainstorming.)	• Improve communications among parents, teachers, employers (Confirmed through needs assessment interviews conducted by committee members with target group members.)	**PREPARE MATERIALS** for each targeted group **DISSEMINATE INFORMATION** in workshops (Through formation of subcommittees that focused on specific target groups.)
Chester Co. I.U. PA	• Alienation of intermediate unit from local schools. (Identified by staff.)	• Demonstrate a model for using school-community members to review, analyze, and improve current programs and their organizational structure. (Confirmed in the orientation meeting.)	**DEMONSTRATE USE OF PROCESS TO PREPARE AND DISSEMINATE MATERIALS** • Review programs and post-school opportunities, expectations and goals of handicapped youth, families, and community. (Through study groups working in three communities to prepare materials such as a list of local resources.)

At least three communities identified problems with the curriculum. These include the lack of prevocational assessments, vocational training and opportunities for on-the-job experience for handicapped youth. Three cited the need to strengthen relationships between schools, employers and community agencies. One multi-district system noted the problem of alienation of the intermediate unit from the local schools.

The groups chose to focus on a variety of tasks from specifying curriculum objectives to recommending improved relationships with various constituencies.

Analyzed after the fact, advisory group strategies tended to cluster around one of two approaches — the recommendations approach, in which the major product was a set of recommendations for change and a service approach in which the group completed specific tasks such as developing a curriculum.

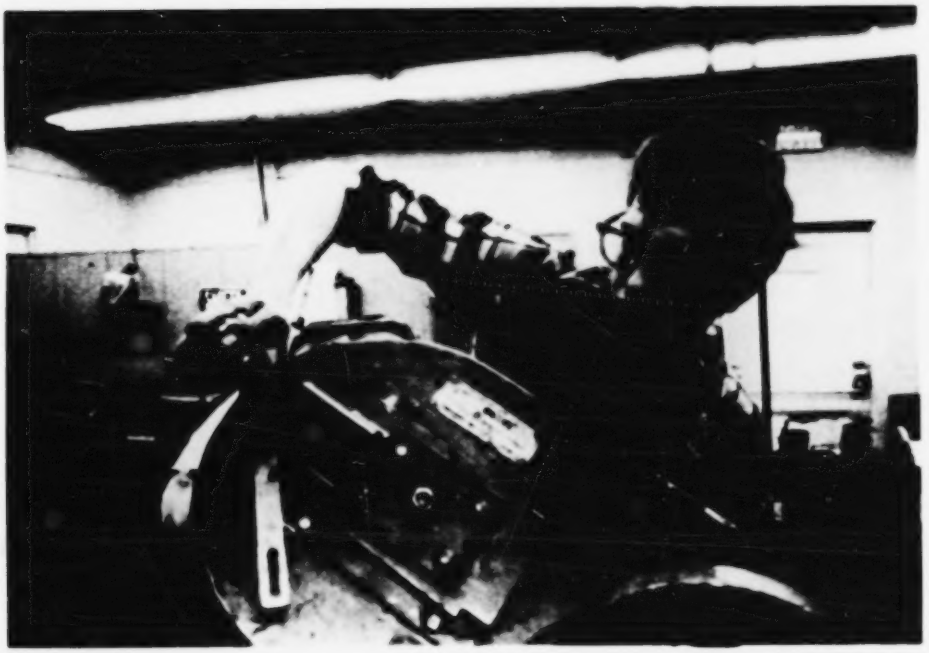


Figure 3.3 shows that the priorities for the two sites using the recommendations approach tended to cluster in three areas: curriculum, school-community cooperation, and support functions. They recommended:

1. Revising the curriculum. Making modifications to the curriculum and adding specialized staff to perform job-oriented functions.

2. Improving school cooperation with employers and agencies. Using formal and informal techniques to implement cooperative relationships and enhance future planning

3. Developing support functions and activities. Assuring continued improvements through monitoring, data collection and staff development.

Priorities of the four sites adopting a direct service strategy was:

1. Identifying work attitudes and skills required for employment. Documenting specific skills for use in the classroom.

2. Improving communications between teachers, parents and employers. Conducting workshops and publishing materials towards this end.

3. Demonstrating the collaborative process for reviewing programs. Engaging employers, community members and school staff in other locations in developing the collaborative process used in projects.

Having identified their priorities, four committees formed subgroups, sometimes with additional members, to complete the tasks they had assigned themselves.

Choices: Advisory and Service Orientations

At the end of chapter 2 we offered guidelines for advisory group functioning. Here we discuss the choice of a group strategy for addressing problems. Gittell (1975) has identified three patterns of group orientation in elementary and secondary school settings: Advisory groups emphasize formulating recommendations for appropriate policies and practices. The two urban sites adopted this orientation. Service groups emphasize carrying out tasks to meet a need or problem. The other four sites adopted this orientation. Advocacy groups emphasize mobilizing political support for an issue or cause.

The six projects fall within the first two categories - advising and service. While none of them was defined as an advocacy group, members increasingly acted as advocates both in their own places of employment and with other boards and groups they work with.

Defining the committee charge as the preparation of recommendations (an advisory orientation) contributes to establishing an initial high priority on group task. A broad focus for group activity is quickly established; further,

the product (recommendations) can be developed in a meeting context in which some of the structured techniques for decision-making, such as nominal group technique, can be used. Group cohesiveness is built when members search for additional information pertinent to the recommendations and meet in loosely structured sub-groups to formulate details. Responsibility for the outcomes of the recommendations lies out of the hands of the group, deferring attention to impact.

Defining the committee charge as development of materials or delivery of workshops (a service orientation) contributes to establishing an initial high priority on group maintenance. Group cohesiveness is built through the search for focus (which may require additional data collection) and by direct engagement in designing publications or conducting workshops. Substantial investment of time in meetings or tasks may be necessary. Outcomes of the services can be directly traced to the efforts of the members, thus strengthening the sense of ownership.

Sites did not necessarily make explicit and conscious choices about using an advisory-recommendations approach versus a direct service approach. Some had a clear focus at the outset, while others used the committee process to work out a direction. In all cases, the last stage of their work involved groups in developing products—whether in the form of elaborated recommendations or various types of materials. In the next chapter we examine these products and suggest guidelines for promoting their use.

Chapter 4

Products of Collaborative Planning

Direct products of the school-community collaboration are presented first for the two sites using the recommendations strategy and then for the four with the services approach.

Products of the Recommendations Strategy

During the course of the projects the two sites with recommendation strategies not only produced recommendations, but began to implement them. Additional steps were taken the following year, at the time this study was being conducted. Here we describe in more detail the kinds of recommendations that were made.

When thoroughly prepared, recommendations take careful account of the schools' past experience in providing services for handicapped students, the organizational barriers and incentives, and the anticipated costs and benefits. At the core of such recommendations are alternate models for operation -- new ways to improve programs. Change strategies may also include a reaffirmation of values or commitments. The Portland Committee, for example, articulated two guiding beliefs which provided a framework for its recommendations: 1) that all students have the right to expect the highest standard of excellence in life preparation from both the schools and the community, and this expectation should be no less for students with handicapping conditions; and 2) since a disability is but one attribute of a complex person, the school should provide diverse opportunities to all students.

The summary listing of recommendations in Figure 4.1 offers an inventory of specific suggestions for improving programs. It is derived from the two sites, St. Paul and Portland, which emphasized the recommendations approach although other communities may have suggested similar changes as well.

Figure 4.1

Recommendations Proposed by Advisory Committees

1. **Revising the Curriculum**

   Models focus on revisions of curriculum sequence and substance within the school and the expansion of work experience sites in the community. Plans include such components as:

   - Pre-vocational assessment of work behaviors, social and interpersonal skills, independent living skills, physical capacity, self-confidence and motivation, and academic skills;
   - Pre-vocational programs to prepare for the work environment — including skills in interpersonal interaction, activities of daily living, occupational awareness and self-advocacy;
   - Vocationally-oriented program options, providing sheltered and unsheltered work centers as appropriate to meet the needs of different students;
   - Work experience programs in school system with listing of tasks for each specified work area;
   - Development of employment and training sites within industry, in service areas as well as in on-line positions;
   - Expanding options for job-site experiences, including job shadowing and on-the-job training.

2. **Improving School Cooperation with Agencies and Employers**

   To formalize collaboration several options were proposed:

   - Institutionalize the Advisory Committee format developed for the project to provide for periodic review of selected programs;
   - Establish special-purpose joint task forces for review and modification of curriculum;
   - Execute formal cooperative agreements with agencies and employers for out-of-school services to students;
   - Develop a new school-based transition-oriented position to coordinate services in agencies and employment;
   - Develop a new employment-based position to provide on-site training, tutoring, and job coaching.

3. **Developing Support Functions and Activities**

   To ensure continued improvement of services to handicapped students, recommendations proposed such activities as:

   - Systematic data collection on employment opportunities and skill needs, as well as vignettes of successful experiences;
   - A Speakers' Bureau to bring representatives from employers to classrooms;
   - Small group school-community meetings to exchange information on agency services and employment opportunities and to increase motivation for program improvement and for hiring;
   - Staff development for school personnel to improve curriculum and instruction;
   - Identification and application of materials to develop interorganizational processes.

Source: Documentation from sites, particularly St. Paul, Minnesota, and Portland, Maine, 1983.

Revising the Curriculum

The various recommendations address both the sequence and substance of curriculum offerings as well as the expansion of work experience opportunities. The general model is for the sequence to include a time for pre-vocational assessment, a period of vocational training in an academic setting and, increasingly, an opportunity for work experience either in the school itself or in the community.

Depending upon the student's capabilities and potential, the pre-vocational assessment may suggest one of three options: placement in an academic program where students are exposed to career options but the orientation is toward higher education upon completion of high school; placement in a vocational program where students receive academic as well as vocational preparation and the orientation is toward securing a job upon graduation; placement in a vocational program where students learn a trade with the goal of competitive or sheltered employment upon graduation. The primary thrust of the sequencing recommendation is to assure that a range of options is available and that they are ordered in a logical sequence, starting when the student is young enough not to be disaffected by school due to other problems.

The quality of the pre-vocational assessment and the numbers and kinds of careers for which the curriculum provides training are crucial aspects of the recommendations. The Portland committee emphasized identifying the kinds of careers in which there are likely to be job openings and the importance of business playing a role in that determination. When possible such jobs should provide wages above the minimum and opportunities for career advancement. Further, special education students should be able to gain access to the kinds of programming already present in the vocational schools. Portland people spent much time identifying barriers to the use of secondary vocational schools (e.g., competition for entry, high academic standards, lack of opportunity for career exploration, statutory reporting requirements emphasizing job placement), and making recommendations to overcome them including: seeking waivers to state statutes, supplementing programs with tutors, and revamping aspects the curriculum.

Expansion of work opportunities is heavily emphasized in the recommendations. The Portland committee suggested that the school examine its own internal possibilities for providing work experience — in the office, stock room, lunch room, library, audio-visual area, and building maintenance, for example. The St. Paul group recommended that areas within companies such as food services and maintenance be used for placements as well as regular on-line positions.

Improving School Cooperation with Agencies and Employers

Several recommendations are geared toward formalizing collaboration among schools, agency personnel and employers. One suggested making use of the cooperative agreement developed by the vocational education and vocational rehabilitation agencies. Special education could become a formal party to the agreement. Another proposed that a standing committee be established to help the schools make better use of community resources in reviewing Individual Education Plans and advising on vocational options. A third idea was to develop a new staff position within the schools whose express purpose would be to link students with the myriad of job training and service agencies in the community as well as to employment opportunities.

In addition to collaboration, schools cited the need to develop specific processes for working directly with industry such as placing a special education teacher with a vocational background on-site as a job coach. St. Paul noted the importance of determining the incentives for industry in cooperating with the schools. For example, employers can receive tax credits and job training funds for hiring handicapped people. In addition, such workers

have been shown to have better attendance records and less turnover than the non-disabled. "We should work more closely with industry to show the potential benefits of hiring."

Appendix B reproduces selected strategies, identified by the St. Paul site where the heaviest emphasis was placed on school-employer collaboration.

Developing Support Functions and Activities

To ensure continued improvement of services to handicapped students, the sites recommended such activities as systematically collecting data on employment opportunities and skill needs; providing vignettes of successful experiences; developing a speakers' bureau; and conducting staff development sessions for school personnel, including regular classroom teachers.

Products of the Services Strategy

The two primary kinds of activities undertaken by sites with a service orientation were the production of materials and the delivery of training and information workshops.

Materials

Materials produced were aimed at various audiences: teachers, employers, parents, students, school personnel, and the federal sponsor of the projects. Their purposes ranged from motivating employers to hire the handicapped to informing teachers of the legal requirements to mainstream students.

Figure 4.2
The Production of Materials: An Overview

Materials	Audience	Purpose	Sources
1. Profile of academic and career competencies	School personnel and students	To guide curriculum design and instruction	a) Employer criteria for hiring, retention, and employment b) Expectations of employers and parents
2. Guide for mainstreaming	Teachers	To inform teachers of legal requirements, and roles and responsibilities of parents, administrators, teachers, students	a) P.L. 94–142 b) School policies and procedures
3. Guide for hiring handicapped	Employers	To motivate employers to hire handicapped; to address concerns; to identify resources	a) Legislation b) Evidence of successful practice c) Inventory of state and local resources
4. Guide for program and career planning	Parents	To inform about legislation and school procedures; to identify supports and resources	a) P.L. 94–142 b) Profile of parent support groups c) Profile of IEP and school programs d) Inventory of state and local resources
5. Listing of state and local resources for training and job opportunities	School and agency personnel and parents	To guide career and program planning	a) Inventory of employment and training opportunities b) Inventory of agency services
6. Guide for reviewing secondary programs	School personnel, employers, and parents	To provide checklist for identifying strengths/weaknesses as basis for improvement	a) Profile of IEP and school programs b) Inventory of state resources
7. Slide-tape presentations	Federal agency (intended for state dissemination) Other	To meet grant requirement Publicity	a) Experiences in developing leadership advisory groups

Source: Reports from six sites on materials produced during the 1981–83 grant period.

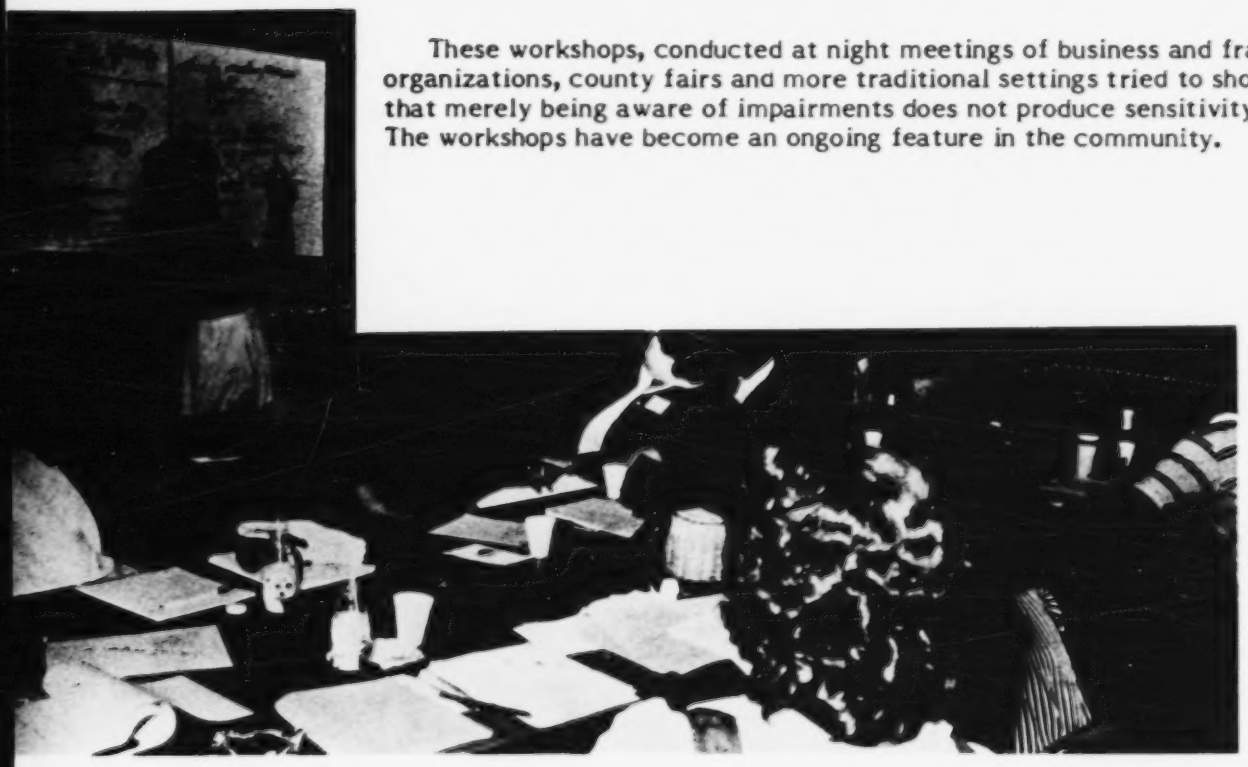
Figure 4.2 summarizes the kinds of materials produced in the sites and provides information on the audience, purpose and sources for each product.

Workshops

Workshops generally clustered around two patterns: those that focused on increasing information about and sensitivity to issues related to transitional services for the handicapped; and those which focused on training school personnel to adapt curriculum and instruction and to strengthen services to students.

In one community targeted audiences gained sensitivity by experiencing various handicapping conditions at a workshop. They tried putting on clothing with one arm, negotiating entries in wheelchairs and joining numbered dots reflected (backwards) in a mirror.

These workshops, conducted at night meetings of business and fraternal organizations, county fairs and more traditional settings tried to show people that merely being aware of impairments does not produce sensitivity to them. The workshops have become an ongoing feature in the community.



As Figure 4.3 shows, informational workshops were geared to a variety of audiences including school and agency personnel, employers, students and parents. Training workshops, however, were primarily aimed at school personnel including special education teachers, regular classroom teachers, vocational teachers and administrators.

Figure 4.3

Two Patterns of Workshops

Type	Audience	Purposes
A. Informational	School and Agency Personnel Employers Students and Parents	1. To improve communication by presenting different perspectives on the experiences of the handicapped 2. To increase awareness and sensitivity among different groups
B. Staff Development/ Training	School Personnel	1. To motivate teachers to incorporate new materials and attitudes in curriculum and instruction 2. To prepare teams to disseminate strategies for incorporating new materials and attitudes through individual school training sessions

Source: Site documents

Guidelines: Developing Effective Recommendations and Services

The recommendations and services summarized in Figures 4.1 through 4.3 suggest a range of ideas which may prove to be viable strategies for other communities.

A group that decides to develop recommendations should make several strategic choices: Who should be the target of these recommendations; how broad or specific should they be; how far-reaching should they be; how can they be justified and sold? From the writings and experiences of the six communities the following guidelines are suggested:

1. Define changes specifically

   - Vague recommendations are subject to misinterpretation by others. Moreover, they are easy to ignore.

2. Target recommendations

   - Responsibility for carrying out each recommendation should be fixed in the action plan. For example, recommendations may be targeted to the school board, the chamber of commerce, the superintendent or a community agency such as a rehabilitation bureau. Ideally, these targets should be party to developing the recommendations through their representation on the advisory committee.

3. Include no-cost recommendations

   - It is always easy for people to reject recommendations on the grounds of cost. Therefore, it is important to consider some that require no new expenditures and are fairly easy to implement. For example, if communication with vocational schools or employers is a problem, the committee can recommend creative use of staff meetings -- perhaps by inviting outsiders to attend.

4. Highlight priority recommendations

   - Long lists of recommendations may overwhelm the recipients. The committee may consider designating key recommendations which have highest priority or ranking all recommendations on a one to three scale. The 'ones' require immediate attention.

5. Develop a monitoring mechanism

   - It is much more likely that a person or organization will heed recommendations if it is known that progress will be reviewed publicly at a certain point in time, perhaps one year hence. Therefore the committee should assure through its own membership or through referral to another group, such as a handicapped rights organization, that implementation of recommendations is monitored.

If a site decides to provide services it, too, must attend to strategic considerations: who should be the target or recipient of the services — the school, employer, parent or agency; what purpose should the activity serve; how do you reinforce the activity; how do you find out if it worked? Review of experience at project sites suggests the following guidelines:

1. Target on audience

   - The intended user of the product or service must be interested in receiving it. Such interest should be determined by committee members. There's no use devising a curriculum if no teacher has an expressed interest in using it.

   - Further, the audience at workshops should include the full spectrum of appropriate people. For example, if the issue is mainstreaming it is fruitless to have only special education teachers in attendance.

2. Use appropriate timing

   - A small but critical issue like timing of the service can be ignored. If a workshop is targeted toward including a vocational component in the IEP, for example, it should be presented before the annual development of IEPs.

3. Provide reinforcement

   - As the literature shows, what is taught in workshops or read in books may well not be adopted into practice unless there is a mechanism to reinforce the learning in the person's own context. In one district teams were formed to conduct follow-up activities in each school.

4. Develop a method for assessment

   - To institutionalize change there must be a mechanism for assessing or at least monitoring activity following the initial service. This might include a review of vocational assessments, an accounting of on-the-job placements actually made, or collection of employment data upon graduation.

Attention to the above considerations increases the likelihood that products and immediate outcomes of action planning will have the intended impact upon problems. To the question of impact we turn next.

Chapter 5

Outcomes of Projects

It took years of court cases and lobbying by parents and professionals to get Congress to pass sweeping laws reforming special education. And it will take years of community efforts to assure the chain of events necessary to move handicapped children from the point in the past at which they had no career aspirations at all to the day in the future when they will be gainfully employed. The problems being addressed are systemic and institutional as well as societal. They cross traditional boundaries between schools and employers, and between regular education, vocational education, special education and vocational rehabilitation.

As the sites themselves discovered, there are no quick fixes. Each moved in its own way along the chain of the flow model (Figure 2.1); some started farther back, using project funds as seed money to initiate activities. Others moved a few more steps along, using project funds to launch activities of more immediate impact on the students themselves. People interviewed expressed mixed degrees of comfort and satisfaction about what was accomplished and the likely impact. They stressed the need for follow-up.

As reviewers but not evaluators of the projects, we gathered information on what the sites considered indicators of project impact. Information came from their project reports and internal evaluations, slide-tape presentations produced for national dissemination, our interviews with advisory committee members and school personnel, and our observations during visits to four sites approximately a year after project completion.

What we saw and heard was a group of dedicated people borrowing time from their own jobs and responsibilities to devote energy to the questions at hand. What they achieved is what you would expect busy people in the trenches to be able to accomplish: generous strides through a long, dark tunnel. Without these projects many of the impressive list of outcomes to follow might not have occurred.

The formation, in each site, of an advisory committee itself provided a vehicle for change and constituted the initial process outcome of the projects. Advisory committees supplied the context for exchanging information among various groups who do not traditionally speak to one another; raising consciousness among school personnel as well as others about the particular vocational needs of special education students; and applying resources towards defining and addressing those needs.

Advisory committee members sometimes unwittingly and often deliberately became advocates both for the special education population and for system change. Focusing attention on these students, participating in project activities, having stories developed for the newspaper, raising expectations about what the committees would recommend, all resulted in a heightened awareness of needs on their part and a growing willingness to do something about them. Interviewees in one site described the project as "a hammer to do something," or as "putting the spotlight" on handicapped youth to stimulate action. This advocacy activity marks the transition between the direct outcomes of the time-bound projects and the longer-term impacts of the undertaking. Advocacy, as a direct result of the projects, laid the groundwork for introducing organizational and curriculum changes.

Earlier we stated the three overall kinds of problems identified by the sites at the outset of their planning processes as: (1) gaps in information and awareness; (2) deficiencies in curriculum and instruction; and (3) weaknesses in organization, administration and collaboration. Figure 5.1 summarizes indicators of impact in these three areas.

Information, Awareness, and Sensitivity

In their written documents and interviews committee participants indicated that they had gained both knowledge about specific vocational needs of the target population and increased sensitivity to the difficulties that face these students in negotiating their school career and in attempting to locate employment. Committee members found themselves promoting the cause in other contexts, back on the job and in organizations they served. Like seeds, their ideas were planted throughout the community sometimes yielding future changes.

Knowledge

By participating in the process or being in systems that did so, school personnel say they gained greater knowledge about the purposes of transitional

Figure 5.1

Indicators of Impact of Collaborative Action Planning

Changes in Organization **

Changes in roles, functions, organization

- A new position for an in-school job placement coordinator was funded and filled.
- Project staff were successful in securing an additional state grant for follow-up activities.
- A company was formed to carry out small contract work which could be done by handicapped students.
- (Both school system and local industries earmarked funds to hire a person to continue the effort. Because no suitable candidate was found the position was not filled.)
- The recreation department has expanded services to include handicapped youth.
- In several sites, employers continue to be represented on committees addressing curriculum content for special education students.
- A science teacher is on loan to a local industry during a sabbatical year in an experience designed to make teaching of science more relevant to the needs of students.
- Representatives of the Vocational Rehabilitation unit have begun to do job development for participants in a program for handicapped youth.

Changes in Curriculum and Instruction *

- New curriculum components geared to increasing student knowledge, skills and aptitudes for jobs have been introduced in all sites.
- Vocationally-oriented curricula have been introduced at earlier grade levels.
- A model for a work-experience program was disseminated to school systems.
- School arranges opportunities for training in industry.
- Funds ($16,000) secured through Committee members are responsible for Project Discovery – a room fully equipped with work stations for vocational training.
- Several sites have arranged for a type of speakers' bureau which brings representatives of employers to classrooms to orient students to types of work available.
- Schools have expanded the array of employment sites available for placement of students.
- Arrangements for job shadowing have been introduced to expose students to five different types of work during the course of a semester.
- Teacher workshops in four sites focused attention on the opportunities to incorporate vocational experience in the IEP; pilots are under way in one site to computerize the IEP to assure appropriate placements for students and track their progress.
- Opportunities for handicapped students to participate in programs at the regional vocational-technical institute have been expanded.

Advocacy: Networking and Consciousness-Raising

- Across all sites participants reported impact from wide dissemination of information and increasing sensitivity and awareness among school personnel, employers, agency staff, handicapped students and their parents. (Comments are summarized in Figure 5.2)
- A Directory of Job Placements for the Handicapped has been distributed to all school superintendents.
- Two sites have introduced career days to expand the knowledge and awareness of students about types of positions available to them.
- In a site with strong parent involvement, dialogue with school and agency staff and employers set the stage for continuing communication among these groups.
- In the same site, parents formed an informal support group which continues mutual encouragement and exchange of information.
- At another site school and agency personnel have continued informal meetings to keep each other apprised of developments.
- In several sites, communication among different segments of the schools (special education, vocational education, regular education) visibly increased.
- In several sites, also, contacts formed with employers provide a basis for continuing interactions related to school programs and provision of work-site experiences.

Source: Site documents and interviews.

Notes: * Formal advisory groups were constituted for one year (1981–82); document review, interviews and site visits were completed in 1984.

** Organizational, curriculum, and networking effects overlap in several instances.

services for handicapped students, the relationship between the IEP process and vocational goal-setting, offerings in other parts of their own systems relevant to the students they serve, skills necessary for entry-level employment, opportunities for jobs and work experiences, and community resources available to serve this population.

Employers say they gained a greater understanding of the different types of handicapped students and their work potential, the various types of work experiences available to handicapped students in schools or through on-the-job training, and ways to make worksites accessible.

Agency personnel felt that they obtained knowledge about opportunities for coordinating services with the schools and the importance of reaching clients at a younger age. They also learned about alternate models of delivering services.

Parents indicated that they learned skills and competencies required for job entry, how they can play more effective roles in the IEP process, options available for job preparation, and how they themselves can help in preparing students for work.

Students (handicapped as well) became aware of and sensitive to the problems as well as the legal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of handicapped people, both within and outside the schools' boundaries.

Sensitivity

School people said they gained a new sensitivity about the self-image and self-esteem needs of disabled people, the expectations and aspirations of parents regarding transition to work, the concerns of employers about appropriate preparation and particularly the importance of positive work attitudes and habits, and the commitment required to coordinate services working through various community agencies.

Several employers indicated that they became more aware of the importance of cooperative efforts between school, community and employers. Some were helped by having the myths associated with hiring the handicapped dispelled. These include higher insurance rates, increased health costs, lower productivity or excess absenteeism. Other areas in which they gained included understanding public relations and community benefits associated with hiring handicapped people and the tax benefits, both to their organizations (through special programs) and to the public.

Agency personnel reported becoming aware of the willingness of school staff to open their doors to outsiders and to establish cooperative relationships. They became sensitized to the constraints deriving from existing agency practices.

Parents say they were sensitized to the importance of conveying their expectations both to their children and to the schools and of maintaining a high vision for their children. They also expressed their sensitivity to sharing their concerns and experiences with other parents.

These perceptions of increased knowledge and sensitivity, derived from statements made by committee members and groups targeted for awareness and sensitivity activities,are summarized in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

Project Impact
Knowledge and Sensitivity

	Better Knowledge of	Increased Sensitivity to
School Staff	• Purpose of transitional services • Preparation for mainstreaming • Alternate models for delivering students • Skills necessary for entry-level employment • Opportunities for work experience and jobs • Available community resources	• Self-esteem of handicapped students • Parental expectations • Concerns of employers • Commitment required to coordinate services
Employers	• Kinds of handicapped students and their work potential • Types of preliminary work experiences available • Myths about health, insurance, absentee costs	• Importance of cooperative efforts • Benefits of hiring handicapped people
Agency	• Opportunities for coordination of services • Alternate models for the delivery of services	• Willingness of schools to coordinate • Constraints deriving from existing practice
Parents	• Skills and competencies required for job entry • IEP process • Options for job preparation • Parental role in preparing children for work	• Importance of conveying expectations • Importance of dealing confidently with school • Working with other parents

Stronger evidence of the effects of change strategies are found in specific activities that translate knowledge into behavior. Two sites introduced career days to expand the knowledge of students about the types of positions available to them. One locale developed a directory of job placements which showed where handicapped individuals had been successfully employed; another

developed a resource directory for use by handicapped students and the professionals and parents who help them find services. In another site parents formed support groups in which members exchanged information and provided mutual encouragement. In one community the advisory committee continued to meet to monitor implementation of project recommendations. In another, people who met through the committee continue to maintain contact "to keep up to date on available jobs and the kinds of skills needed in industry." One person noted simply, "The result of the project was a lot of people acting very upbeat and positive."

Curriculum and Instruction

There is evidence that, of all the problem areas addressed, the impact on curriculum and instruction may have been the greatest. All sites had at least some recommendations targeted at curriculum change. Curriculum lies within the domain of the school system, and while resources and even politics might pose barriers to change, schools had opportunities to demonstrate a willingness to improve programs by implementing recommendations in this area.

Impacts observed as a result of projects, in conjunction with efforts that may already have been under way, include introduction of a vocationally-oriented curriculum at earlier grade levels, specifically at junior high. The purpose is to implant the idea of vocational goals in students earlier and to help staff start to assess career aptitudes and options. In that regard, one system obtained a vocational education grant through a committee member to equip a room with work stations for vocational exploration. Another location introduced a "survival skills" curriculum which helped students, particularly those with behavioral and emotional problems, deal with the situations they would face on the job.

One administrator noted a significant impact in the IEP process. Due to concentration on the issue, in-service efforts and legal changes, "we now can't find any IEPs that do not have a vocational plan in them."

A regional pilot program in one state grew out of the community experience. In conjunction with the State Department of Education, the project provides special resource materials to 23 high schools and one area vocational center. Aides and tutors assist in providing remedial courses, vocational training, and transitional services for special students including those with limited English proficiency.

Schools expanded the array of employment sites available for student placement both during the high school years and upon graduation. They arranged opportunities for specialized training in industrial settings. One district instituted an elaborate job shadowing program in which students are exposed to five different kinds of employment during the course of a semester. Opportunities for special education students to participate in programs at the regional vocational education institute have also been expanded. When necessary, modifications were made to the curriculum to integrate these students into the regular program.

Organization, Administration and Collaboration

In the year following completion of projects changes in roles, functions and organization were introduced at sites, in part as an outgrowth of project activities. In the area of personnel, a new position for an in-school job placement coordinator was funded and filled at one site. In another, a science teacher was placed on loan to a local industry during a sabbatical year in an effort to make the teaching of science more relevant to the needs of students and industry upon his return. Employers continue to be represented on committees to address curriculum content for vocational training.

In the area of functions, a recreational department expanded services to include handicapped youth. In Decatur, Illinois, for example, this department held a Very Special Arts Fair with a public performance and display culminating 6 to 8 weeks of effort in which handicapped youth learned dance, music and art. After three years the Fair has become a community institution. The school system found ways disabled students could be employed on the premises. Representatives of the vocational rehabilitation agency have begun to develop jobs for participants in a program for handicapped youth.

Since members of the advisory groups serve on several other boards, their influence can pervade the community. In one site [Decatur, Illinois], group members stimulated CETA and JTPA to provide testing and jobs for special students. People became aware that school dropouts could receive training at a Rehabilitation Center after age 16 and a new facility was opened downtown.

In the area of organization, two communities launched programs in which students generated income for their continuation. In Oxford, Massachusetts students in computer maintenance have service contracts with local firms. The special education department in St. Paul started the Multi-Products Company, a small business within the school that manufactures primarily wood products. Students saw, sand, assemble and stain such items as wooden trays, country bun baskets, and napkin holders which appeal to the country crafts market. The company has a sales representative who ships goods around the country. Students work for two hours and spend the balance of the day in other programs. In addition to manufacturing, they learn bookkeeping, computer entry, shipping and related functions. Last year sales topped $7,000 and students earned between $.40 and $.80 an hour.

Regarding internal operations, several schools were concerned with monitoring the implementation of activities prescribed in the IEPs. A pilot project is underway to computerize the IEP to assure appropriate placement of students and to track their progress.

These examples illustrate that the projects, either alone or in conjunction with other initiatives, definitely produced changes in the schools. The following guidelines appear to enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Guidelines: Assuring Positive Outcomes

1. Don't operate in isolation

   - Change was most likely to occur when the project's work was not conducted in isolation but was part of a complementary set of activities geared to program improvement. Other activities may have included funded demonstration projects which had already put one piece of the curriculum in place or purchased some of the vocational training equipment that would be necessary.

2. Identify locus of responsibility

   - Another important factor in achieving long-term impact is to have someone within the school system willing to take major

responsibility for implementing changes. Whether that person be school superintendent, principal, special education director or classroom teacher, if he or she did not exist or was not willing to accept responsibility, nothing of significance happened. If the attitude is that when the grant period is over, the opportunity for change has expired, obviously not many long-range objectives can be achieved.

3. Be creative and inventive

- In some cases lack of financial resources became an impediment to change. However in other places, and often those with the least financial resources, creativity and inventiveness produced the greatest results. Because of parental concern and pressure a relatively poor town developed a greater array of services to handicapped youth than a relatively wealthier town served by the same intermediate unit.

  Also, be creative with the use of federal special education funds available to all districts -- monies can be used with a fair amount of discretion and schools should not fear reprogramming them to newly identified ends.

4. Develop tools to measure impact

- To monitor change people need baseline information. In some instances it was extremely difficult to obtain what would appear to be standard data, e.g. the number of handicapped students by category. Getting any kind of follow-up data was nearly impossible in most places. Yet how can people determine if their programs are affecting employment if they don't know who holds jobs six months or three years later?

  Therefore, if schools, employees and community agencies all wish to be effective and to know if they are, they need to spend some time determining those measures of impact and ways to monitor them.

5. Keep your eye on the ball

- Since the problems are systemic and the solutions complex, it is important for people trying to solve them to keep their eye on the ball: to never lose sight of the purpose of the activity--helping students train for gainful employment and prepare themselves to live independently.

From Action Planning to Jobs and Independence

Two critical questions remain. What combination of conditions relating both to the school and/or community and to the nature of the recommendations produced the most effective change? Will these changes have a long-range impact on the employability of students?

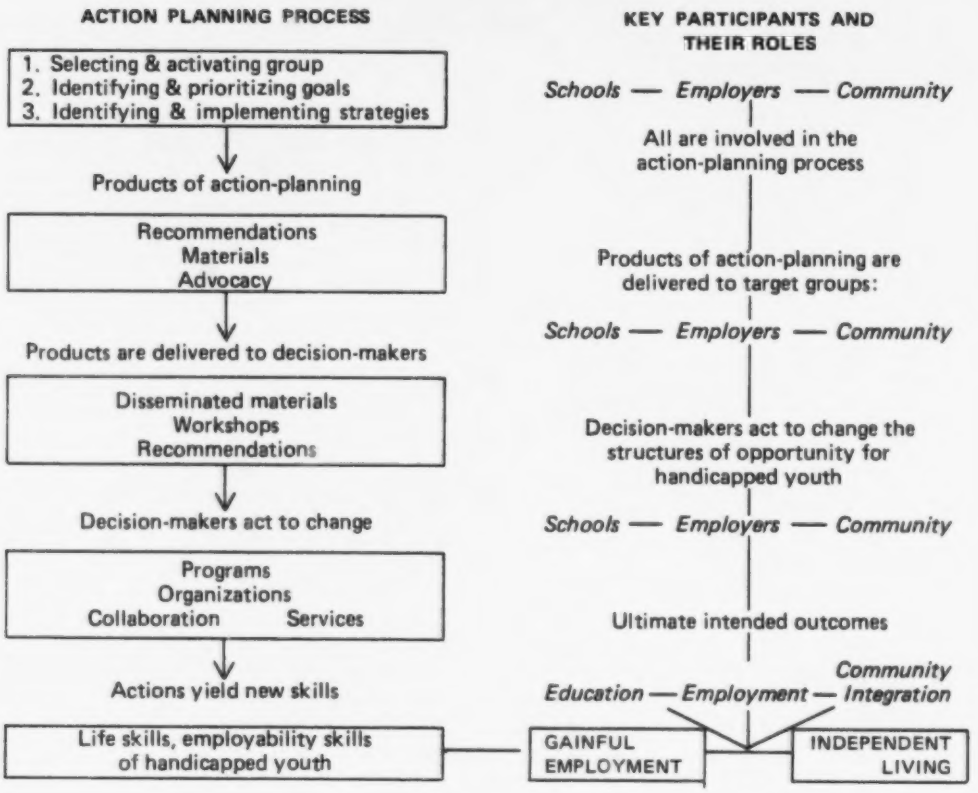
At the beginning of our examination we presented a simple flow model (Figure 2.1) depicting steps in the action planning process and their relationship to products and outcomes. The model suggests the logic behind advisory group activities. It was expected that collaborative planning would identify key problem areas and generate strategies for addressing them. It was also expected that the products of this work would lead to changes that would mitigate targeted problems.

Review of available evidence one year after project completion confirms that there were indeed positive changes — in knowledge and awareness, in curriculum and organization, and in involvement of schools with the community. We have documented indicators of immediate or short-run outcomes. Whether the changes become institutionalized over the longer-run remains an open question.

Time-bound projects can be catalysts for action. They should be seen, however, as part of a larger picture of activities needed to achieve the ultimate goals of jobs and independence. Figure 5.3 depicts the logic linking the advisory group projects to these goals. To illustrate the logic involved, consider that, as an example, the advisory process could identify problems and develop recommendations to improve some aspect of programming. For any improvement to occur, however, first the products must be targeted and delivered to people who have the power to make changes; then those people have to implement the changes, taking into account competing priorities.

Figure 5.3

From Action-Planning to Independent Life and Work
A Logic Model



Following the logic a step further, the changes have to prove in fact to be effective in giving students the requisite skills for jobs and community life -- an outcome that may be influenced by variables in addition to the programs provided. Finally, the logic assumes that if handicapped youth leave school with these skills, they will be likely to find and keep jobs and enjoy independent living.

Many variables inside and outside school systems can affect the validity of assumptions underlying this logical chain of events and whether the ultimate impact on employment and community living will be achieved. Figure 5.3 illustrates several points about impact.

1. A project's immediate impact will fall at different points in the chain, depending upon prior activities

   - In some of the communities we studied there was immediate focus upon improving programs through linkages with employers. In others, the emphasis was on creating a climate for such change by increasing information and awareness of key actors. Projects may catalyze a process already under way, or may be the stimulus to getting started.

2. Employers and community members must be involved early

   - As far as schools are concerned, if effective programs and transitional services are to be developed and implemented, key community members (notably employers and service agency personnel) should be involved with the schools early and on a continuing basis — rather than sporadically and at the time for aging-out or graduation.

3. Reaching the ultimate goals of employment and independence requires perserverance and coordinated action

   - Policies and practices in government agencies, business and industry, organized labor, and in housing, transportation and other service areas all need to be examined in light of the goals.

Part III

Programs and Agendas

What's ahead. . .

The six projects which brought community leaders into a planning process with the schools illustrate a range of priorities, planning options, and strategies for improving secondary school programs. These initiatives developed within a context--a web of prior and concurrent activities intended to meet the needs of youth with mental, physical, emotional or social handicaps. The projects contributed to program improvement in different direct and indirect ways, as discussed in Part II. In Part III we move beyond the confines of the projects to look more closely at programs and issues concerned with preparing handicapped youth for jobs.

Chapter 6, Vocational Programs and Settings, addresses the general question: What types of job preparation programs are found at the six sites? We offer a typology for examining programs in light of the ultimate goals of competitive employment and integration of graduates into adult community life, illustrate the options from programs identified in sites, and suggest questions to guide the assessment of program offerings.

Chapter 7, Agendas for Action, discusses issues affecting the preparation of handicapped youth for jobs and their transition from school to life and work in the community. Agendas for action are identified at federal, state and local levels.

Chapter 6

Vocational Programs and Settings

The six sites, with their varying geographical settings and populations and their diverse educational traditions and resources, represent a microcosm of the national education scene. Likewise, the array of programs identified through site documents, interviews, and visits reflect major types of vocational programs actually or potentially available to handicapped students at present. In this chapter we use selected examples from the sites to illustrate a typology of programs and settings. We then pose questions to pinpoint areas for program improvement in light of the twin goals of competitive employment and independent living.

A Typology of Programs and Settings

Both the content of programs and their settings influence whether they will be effective in preparing students for life after school. Program content can range from general vocational preparation to specific job training, to direct work experience, moving in the direction of competitive employment. Program settings may be mainstreamed--integrating handicapped and non-handicapped people, or separate--exclusively for special populations. These features suggest a fourfold typology of vocational programming:

A. Job preparation programs in integrated settings.

B. Job preparation programs in segregated settings.

C. Direct work experience programs in integrated settings.

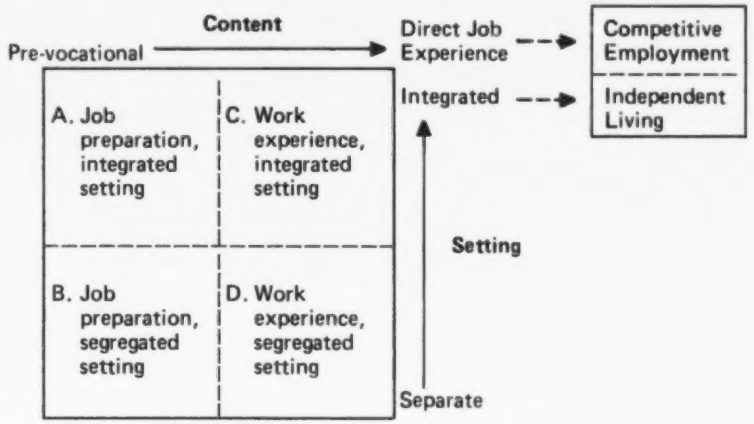
D. Direct work experience programs in segregated settings.

Any of these may occur at school sites or work sites, as the examples illustrate. Programs which we studied incorporated these elements in varying degrees, with the most developed offering a progression of experiences moving in the direction of "real" job experiences at work sites.

Such a typology (see Figure 6.1) offers a useful touchstone for examining programs in light of the ultimate goals of competitive and independent living. Selected examples of the four types of programming drawn from project sites illustrate options available to support the transition from school to work.

Figure 6.1

A Typology of Vocational Programming



Job Preparation in Integrated Settings (Model A)

The larger sites typically offer a sequence of programs to prepare handicapped youth for the world of work. Some introduce pre-vocational training and job exploration material in middle school, some later. Job preparation may take place in school settings or work sites.

School Settings

Within school settings we have observed the consulting and tutorial models used to offer handicapped students the same range of subjects available to others.

Consulting Model: Here handicapped students are placed in vocational programs with other students, with the special education teacher available to consult at varying levels of intensity. The regular classroom teacher may be completely responsible for the student, maintaining access to a special education instructor for consultation. Sometimes consultation is structured: the resource teacher reviews curriculum materials and lesson plans in advance with the classroom teacher, discussing areas to modify for the special

student. Other times the relationship is informal, with the classroom teacher seeking help when faced with a stumbling block. The informal approach works well if communication is ongoing and not a matter of bringing the resource specialist in after a problem becomes a crisis.

Of all the models, this is the least restrictive. Students are not differentiated in any observable way, although their tasks may be modified to meet specific physical or mental limitations. In some schools, integration occurs for some courses but not others. For example, a person with intellectual limitations may be placed in a special math course but in an integrated shop program.

At the Bedford, Massachusetts site, with its predominently college-bound student population and mildly learning disabled students, mainstreaming is achieved in many courses through team teaching. Special education teachers break down subject material into components appropriate for the students in academic courses as well as a world-of-work practicum. In the Decatur Area Vocational Center, the special education teacher acts as consultant to the regular teachers. As a result of the project he now has two aides who deal with vocational staff and help students learn to interview, write resumes, and so forth.

Tutorial Model: In this approach, the special education or resource teacher provides vocational instruction to the student in an integrated classroom, usually for only a portion of the class period. The tutorial model is particularly suited to vocational programming because so much of the work involves doing rather than listening. A small amount of extra help, a close-up demonstration for the visually impaired, or sign interpretation for the deaf, can sometimes be all the student needs to be able to remain in the mainstream classroom. For students with behavioral or emotional problems, the tutor can help maintain order so the classroom teacher is not distracted from working with other people.

The tutorial model can be a cost-effective way of giving disabled students access to the range of offerings available to others in that it does not necessitate duplication of expensive equipment. Yet it can be expensive to have special education teachers work with very small groups in several classrooms. One solution is to have volunteers work under the resource teacher's immediate guidance. Another is a buddy system whereby students are paired to work together, or students proficient in a skill volunteer one period a day to aid special students, again under the special education teacher's guidance.

In the St. Paul schools tutors are provided to help students become integrated into regular vocational programs such as food occupations, health careers, auto mechanics, and graphics. If a student is deaf, for example, a tutor may come in to give instructions in sign language but rely on the regular teacher to take over after that. For other students, closer monitoring and assistance is necessary to ensure they master material to the best of their ability.

In Decatur buddies or pals help involve handicapped students in social events. For example, a pal might take a student to a dance. "It worked better than we anticipated," says the administrator.

Work Sites

Sometimes occupational preparation programs take place at work sites where handicapped students are integrated. These programs place students in jobs, usually for a portion of the day, to supplement what they have learned in a vocational classroom and to give them an opportunity to build a work record.

One system's community-based work experience program is designed to focus upon the uniqueness of each participant, the student's needs for acceptance and a feeling of success, and the need to acquire skills necessary for entry-level employment upon graduation. The school considers this a

pre-vocational program in that its goals are to improve the overall likelihood of future employability and to provide "life survival skills" such as practice in taking public transportation, eating in restaurants and getting along with co-workers. The students often earn an income while engaged in on-the-job training.

Career explorations and job shadowing programs offer students opportunities to learn by observing and doing. For example, Decatur's Work Experience/Career Exploration Program (WECEP) provides "try-out" opportunities which enable students to explore various career options and on-the-job training in a range of sites.

In one program in St. Paul, students observe at five different jobs during the course of the semester. The experience includes finding their way to work by public transportation, filling out five different job applications, having five job interviews and working in five occupations. They also gather five employer references which are kept on file for two years--making contacts which may later prove useful.

Job Preparation in Segregated Settings (Model B)

Separate programs within a school

Separate vocational classrooms or even entire vocational programs may be set up within a regular high school or vocational school, with the curriculum geared toward the special student. The work may be broken into smaller, discrete tasks, or the equipment may be adapted for people with physical or motor limitations.

In a St. Paul high school, an entire vocational sequence for special students was established. It includes work evaluation, skills training and work adjustment components as well as on-the-job training, discussed below. In work evaluation students spend two hours a day for nine weeks learning about the world of work and trying their abilities at various tasks such as operating a cash register, testing soil, wiring, soldering, repairing engines, welding, calculating data, caring for animals, developing photographs and hairdressing. During this period, students can identify areas that they enjoy while the teaching staff evaluates their manual, physical and intellectual aptitudes, behavior and interests. Students take achievement, aptitude, dexterity and vocational interest tests to help in the assessment. They are also instructed in how to fill out a job application, how to develop a resume and how to go for a job interview. From this experience, the teacher/vocational instructor recommends what the next vocational experience should be either within the special education program or in the system's other programs.

Some post-secondary vocational training institutes are operated under the auspices of local school boards, thus affording qualified students a greater chance to make the transition to higher education. One such school, St. Paul TVI, offers an innovative program for deaf students, enrolling approximately 100 at any given time. For the first twelve weeks, students are immersed in an exploration of career options. They try their hand at graphic arts, data processing, welding, cooking, drafting, electronics, among others. At the same time, they attend a preparatory program for making the transition to living independently in a hearing community and receive remedial work in academic subjects to prepare for a competitive educational program. After this segregated period, they are referred to one of seven cooperative vocational schools to pursue their vocational choice; one of the seven caters to special education students. Sometimes notetakers and interpreters are used to help students function in the hearing environment.

Special Schools

Despite the trend toward mainstreaming, some of the project sites have been involved in opening separate schools to serve special students on a full- or part-time basis. These facilities provide both vocational and academic preparation, but the amount of time students spend there varies. A common reason for establishing separate facilities is to serve a large region, with students coming from many sending schools. Sometimes, the purpose is to serve special students who are disillusioned with traditional education and will not be taught in a normal school environment. Some schools for severely handicapped or multiply disabled students have been separate for a long time and are now introducing vocational programs or upgrading their offerings.

Project COFFEE in Oxford, Massachusetts serves over 100 students from 12 districts who have one or more of the following characteristics: high absenteeism, involvement with the courts, broken homes, low skills, alcohol and drug abuse. Many are special education students by virtue of the fact they have dropped out of other schools. Students spend four hours a day in the program--two hours in academic training (this may occur in the regular high school, one of which is adjacent to the special school) and two hours in occupational training in one of six categories: building and grounds, which includes rough carpentry and finishing furniture; computer maintenance and repair; horticulture-agriculture; distributive education, including printing; computer sciences; and electronic assembly. Two teachers are assigned to each occupation, one focusing on academics, the other on skill training. The

program also includes physical education and counseling, where social and emotional support are provided, and it has an important job component (see Model D below). Students stay in the program anywhere from three months to four years, the average being about two years or less. Forty percent are sent back permanently to the original district. Whether returned physically or not, students are considered graduates of their sending schools.

A variation on the separate school is a special summer school geared toward vocational training for special students, minorities and low achievers. In Oxford, Massachusetts, French River Teacher Center received a grant from a large electronics manufacturer to instruct teachers and then special students entering high school on how to use computers. During the first summer, students learn computer literacy and computer programming; in the second they learn how to use computer software such as Visicalc, word processing and data base management to solve problems.

Vocational Schools (A and B Models)

As examples included under A and B indicate, vocational schools may serve handicapped students in regular or separate classes. They generally receive students from many sending schools within a district or a region. Interviews surfaced both particular problems and special initiatives arising in the relationship between special education and the vocational schools.

There is often tension about admission criteria: sending schools would like to see more special education students in the vocational system whereas vocational directors may view an influx of these students as inhibiting their efforts to upgrade or maintain high quality standards. One complained, "Towns see us as a dumping ground. Some even avoid categorizing students as special education so we will be more likely to accept them." Vocational schools are often more accountable than academic programs for the job placement success of their graduates. Administrators worry that special students will pull down earnings and jobs retention averages.

For the litany of problems, however, we noted patterns of coordinated efforts to increase opportunities and success rates of special students in vocational schools. Some, for example, use "generic consultants" who work with instructors throughout the school to modify programming as appropriate. In the Vocational Education for Exceptional Persons (VEEP) program in Portland, Maine, a coordinator was hired to work with schools sending students into the area vocational school, allowing 100 students to be mainstreamed into regular vocational areas. The first three years of the program were funded under a federal grant funneled through the State Bureau of Vocational Education, with the district picking up funding thereafter. The liaison person

attends PET meetings in which individual educational plans are formulated, advises on vocational placement, monitors students' progress, provides support to the vocational instructors, and coordinates a tutorial program. Such a liaison is a further example of a boundary-crossing role which enhances understanding across the regular, vocational, and special education systems and increases opportunities for success of handicapped youth.

Work Experience In Integrated Settings (Model C)

By the time they leave high school non-handicapped students have had many more opportunities for work experience through summer and part-time jobs than have their handicapped peers. Vocational instructors and employers are heard to complain that handicapped students lack the most basic work and social skills needed for getting and keeping a job. Hence the importance of secondary programs which offer job experience at work sites.

Part-time or temporary work experience has been incorporated for more than a decade in Oxford, Pennsylvania a district of the Chester County Intermediate Unit. Initiated for special education students, the program is now available to all students--confirming a perception that special education can lead the way in some aspects of vocational education. The program begins with a personal introduction to the employer by the Work Experience Director and a mock interview by the employer. Formal and informal visits by the Director monitor and evaluate progress. Topics for class discussion are often derived from work site visits.

Both Portland and St. Paul use work sites within the school system where students are assigned positions in offices, libraries, cafeterias, and reproduction and printing units. In such programs, students may receive salaries at minimum wage or below. In one site, students are placed first in jobs in the high school they attend, next somewhere within the school system itself, and finally, in a position developed by a local job development agency.

A few systems are beginning to experiment with contracting out a large portion of the student's day to private agencies that provide work and sometimes educational experiences either on the premises or in placements they develop. Some on-the-job experience occurs during the summer but is coordinated by or with special education teachers.

In Portland, Maine, a Summer Youth Employment Program targeted 40 non-profit supervised placements for handicapped youth, some in work crews to assure greater support. Students were identified by special education teachers in area schools who filled out extensive referral information. The 90 students who applied were all interviewed by the agency and at job sites.

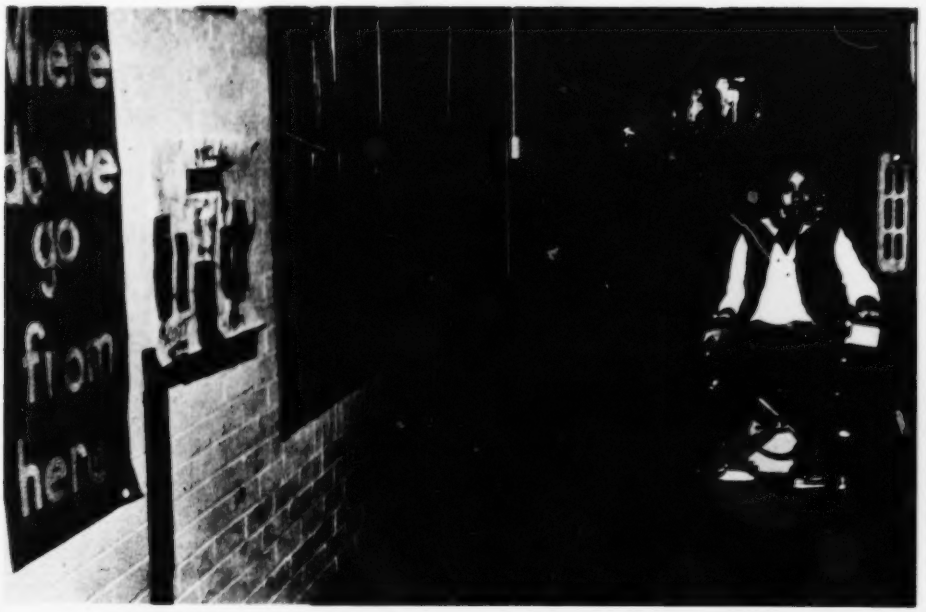
Work Experience in Segregated Settings (Model D)

One component of Project COFFEE in Oxford, Massachusetts aims to transform training programs into financially independent operations. A unique aspect of this program is that all the occupational areas have established income-generating components operated by students, thus providing job experience. For example, the computer repair program has established maintenance contracts with computer owners both inside and outside the district. For $150 a year, students will repair terminals whenever they break. They have learned this craft on equipment donated by a large computer manufacturer in the state. "This kind of practical experience will help students become field technicians starting at $17,000," says the proud instructor. The data processing unit does programming on student services, scheduling and grades for school districts. The agricultural program does ground maintenance under contract and sells plants. Through these experiences students learn how to perform to professional expectations and within time constraints.

The "sheltered workshop" model is generally incorporated in the range of services provided by states through Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation. Many school systems incorporate such programs for severely handicapped students. Efforts to erase the "make-work" or "no-work-today" environment appear in a number of innovations.

The Macon County Rehabilitation Center in Illinois, for example, has contracts for production of all license plates for the State of Illinois; for shop aprons, bags and mops for Firestone plants in the United States and Canada; and for a million decorations a month for Kahlua liqueur bottles. This agency accepts student drop-outs after age 16 and trains them in a non-academic setting. Clients rotate among jobs, try out new jobs, and some may eventually be placed in regular work sites.

Minnesota Diversified Industries (MDI) is a partially integrated site: 70 to 80% of the 500 person workforce is handicapped. The presence of a significant 20 to 30% of workers not classified as having handicapping conditions offers the possibility of social and work role models. With clients such as Sperry, 3M and the U.S. Post Office (for which they package all special collection stamps for the country), sales volume reaches $4 million annually. Several Department of Labor certificates allow payment of reduced hourly wages and MDI uses a differential pay base depending on the job. The hourly rate is set for each task in one of three ways: 1) using job standards from industry if possible, 2) using task analysis, or 3) using past experience. The operation is a site for job shadowing for the St. Paul schools and it hires many graduates.



"Mainstreaming to Life"

Brief thumbnail sketches cannot capture either the dynamism or disappointments of those offering programs for handicapped students.

Each effort at innovation carries its own strains and tensions. Placing handicapped students in paying jobs in the schools themselves, for example, may antagonize students still in preparation programs and raise questions about student compensation. Separate programs may unwittingly function as terminal rather than transitional for those with capacities to progress further towards independent living and competitive employment. Resources for tutors may strain local budgets even though many students benefit. (In at least one community federal funds were used to employ tutors and aides.) Even as positives and negatives abound, however, pioneering efforts open up new possibilities.

The Teenage Program of St. Paul, for example, breaks new ground in a number of ways. First, it is a unique example of a compact with an agency to provide training and employment for a group of learning disabled students. Second, because the site is an elderly complex, students learn and work in an environment that is integrated socially and intergenerationally. Finally, the program is carefully sequenced. A six-week probationary period includes testing, orientation, and four hours of classroom work per day, including instruction in filling out job applications and interviewing. During the second six weeks classroom time is reduced to two hours daily; the balance is spent working in a job service program at the complex, performing jobs for senior citizens--many of a personal nature such as polishing nails, moving furniture,

chatting with lonely people or reading to them. The final six weeks is the community service component in which students perform volunteer jobs for nominal pay--working in such places as the beauty shop or library and continuing two hours of classroom instruction per day, sometimes in their sending schools. They are treated as employees of the agency receiving paychecks and handling a savings account.

Because the students are learning disabled, they have a difficult time transferring learning from one situation to another. The staff aids in this process as well as improving the students' self-esteem through individual and group counseling. Before completing the program, all students have been exposed to nine different jobs. The goal of the program? "To mainstream to life."

Assessing Gaps in Current Programming

In assessing current vocational offerings, it is useful to think about the continuum of options along various dimensions and to ask: Where are we strongest now? Where are we weakest? What is the most important gap to fill? How might we modify what we are doing, adapt promising practices, create new options? What can be done by reallocating existing resources of people and dollars? For which activities will we have to seek new sources of support? Selecting particular targets for program improvement will depend in part on the local context (especially the nature of employment opportunities), and in part on assessment of current programs.

There are several interacting dimensions for making an appraisal: target populations served, degree of social integration between handicapped youth and others, extent of job opportunities, and the range of work tasks for which training programs are being designed.

Target Populations

While there may be overlapping needs for services across groups, pinpointing underserved target groups helps to assess programming gaps.

- Are there individual students or groups not well served at present?
- What types of program offerings best meet their needs?

One can collapse the categories of handicapping conditions which schools must consider in program development into three broad groupings: mental disabilities, physical disabilities, and social/emotional disabilities. In our site visits we noticed that many of the new vocational developments and resources are being directed to students disaffected from the traditional school system--adolescents considered to have social and emotional adjustment problems which gravely affect school performance and attendance. Our data reflect the national trend to increasing categorization of students as "learning disabled"--which, interviews suggest, may be used as a catchall or or as a designation more innocuous than "retarded" or "emotionally disturbed". On the other hand, the number of physically and multiply handicapped students recorded in many sites is relatively low (perhaps in the latter case because students are served in special schools).

When the target group is socially/emotionally handicapped, programs tend to include strong doses of behavior modification techniques (points for coming to class, turning in work and so forth) and specific activities that build self-confidence and create an environment for success.

When the target group is mentally handicapped, programming depends on the severity of the disability. Intensive supervision requires low student-teacher ratios. Job analysis and task-orientation are often emphasized, making the curriculum and instruction highly structured.

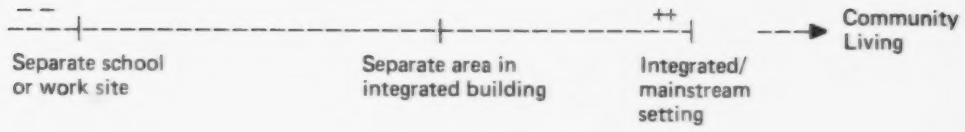
When the target group is physically disabled without mental complications, removing physical barriers and modifying equipment are important interventions. Sometimes crude changes like expanding the width of aisles to allow wheelchair passage are all that is needed. Other times highly sophisticated electronic devices help people to communicate and manipulate.

While attention to needs associated with different handicapping characteristics does influence the content, methods and relative amounts of time spent in particular program types, we emphasize the importance of assessing all programs against their contributions to competitive employment and independent living goals.

Separation/Integration Continuum

Programs referenced in this chapter fall along a continuum of social separation to social integration--or from most restricted to least restricted social environment--moving in the direction of integrated life in the community.

The Separation/Integration Continuum



In assessing programs, we can ask:

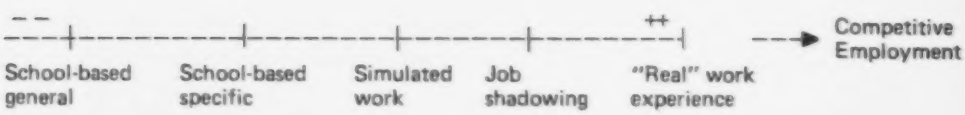
- Where does existing programming lie on the separation/ integration continuum?
- Do offerings give students increasing opportunities for learning in socially integrated settings?
- Are resources used most effectively to give access to mainstream vocational program opportunities?

The question, "What type of program is appropriate for this student, when, and for how long?" suggests providing a variety of opportunities, with individual involvement carefully sequenced and balanced to meet special needs. Providing "appropriate education" in the "least restrictive environment" argues for moving towards models which lie at the more integrated end of the continuum.

School-oriented/Job-oriented Continuum

Program components described above may be seen as providing a sequence of training opportunities, emphasizing general preparatory studies at one end and moving toward work-site experiences at the other--and hence in the direction of competitive employment. Here, as

The School-oriented/Job-oriented Continuum



in the case of integrated vs. separate programming, the question, "What type of program, when, for how long, will best ease the transition of this student into post-school life and work?" will produce different answers for different students. The IEP process is the appropriate vehicle for making individualized choices. In general, however, concern for transition to competitive employment means assuring opportunities to all students for exploration and skill-building in job-oriented programs.

In assessing programs, we can ask:

- Where does existing programming lie on the school-oriented/job-oriented continuum?
- Do students have opportunities to explore a range of job clusters and work options?
- Do programs provide increasing opportunities for learning in job-settings as compared to classroom-settings?
- Do programs give increasing opportunities for skill-building by doing "real work" as compared to simulated work?
- Are resources being used most effectively to give access to job opportunities?

As illustrations from project sites show, schools can offer on-the-job training at job sites within the school system, deploying resource staff in tutorial roles or as consultants to peer or employee job coaches. Expanding program opportunities in the direction of community-based experience calls for building collaboration with local agencies and businesses, some complexities of which were discussed in Part II. The St. Paul project report (1983) offers a useful set of guidelines for developing school-employer programs; these are reproduced in Appendix B.

Further questions that merit attention in assessing available programs are:

- Do programs include the range of skills needed to get and keep a job?
- Do students who need the longest lead time to develop skills start the process early enough?
- Are instructional materials age-appropriate?
- To what extent is training geared toward work-site performance standards?

To get and keep a job students need more than technical skills. They require job placement skills: knowing how to make applications, interview and learn at the work site. They require work support skills: knowing how to function on a personal and social basis to retain a job. And they need the ability to make work choices so as not to remain locked in to a particular function.

Some people believe students must cover basic academics to a school-determined level before vocational concerns should be considered. The problem with this thinking is that those who need longest to develop job-related skills may get inadequate or no opportunities to do so. "This is a problem for all kids," not just handicapped, said one person in Illinois where the sentiment is in favor of increasing graduation requirements. "By the time the requirements are met, there is no time for vocational education." Hence the caution that curriculum objectives not be so rigidly sequenced as to prevent students from getting technical skills as well as job finding and social skills.

In general, concern for transition of handicapped youth to competitive employment suggests that vocational programming be increasingly reality-based, involving exposure to "real work" and job settings and reflecting understanding of the expectations of the employment marketplace. Hence, programs planned with employer involvement that expose students to work-site training are essential components of appropriate vocational training.

While much may be accomplished by adjusting existing programs and re-allocating existing resources, it is clear that substantial innovation to increase the range of quality opportunities calls for infusion of new resources to expand curricula, retool staff, and develop strong bridges between school, work and agencies. The final chapter begins with a description of federal initiatives to this end.

Chapter 7

Agendas for Advocacy and Action

The prime focus of this book has been on collaborative action between schools and communities with the objective of improving secondary school programs that support the transition of handicapped youth from school to work. Without effective state and national leadership, however, local actors will lack some of the requisites for success: clearly legitimated policy and management goals, adequate resources, and administrative mechanisms for implementing transitional programs. As the following section illustrates, federal leadership has been firmly asserted in the area of transitional services. State and local actors committed to the goals of independent living and competitive employment now have the backing and support to proceed with implementing changes in the field.

The final chapter moves the discussion of vocational preparation and transitional services from the past to the future. In it we review recent federal initiatives and suggest agendas to pursue at the state and community levels.

Federal Initiatives

The Transitional Authority

The 1983 Amendments (PL 98-199) to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) signals strong federal support for transitional programs and services. Section 626 creates a new authority for "Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Handicapped Youth" (commonly referred to as the "Transitional Authority").

Major objectives of the transitional authority are: "(1) To stimulate improvement and development of programs for secondary special education and (2) To strengthen and coordinate education, training, and related services for handicapped youth to aid the process of transition to post-secondary education, vocational training, competitive employment, continuing education, or adult services." The teeth are a set of provisions for research, development and evaluation; dissemination activities; staff recruitment and training; and parent training and information. Appendix C summarizes the kinds of projects authorized.

The 1984-1990 agenda of grants and contracts for research, demonstration and evaluation activities sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) illustrates the dimensions of federal initiatives to stimulate innovation and improvement of practice:

- 78 awards in FY 1984 (71 demonstration; 7 research);
- 53 additional awards in FY 1985 (33 demonstration; 20 research);
- 95 new and continuing awards annually for 1986-1990;
- Five-year funding for a major institute to focus on programmatic research on functional competencies, variables that promote them, and environmental accommodations needed when they are absent;
- Five-year funding for a second major institute to emphasize research, and evaluation of the interventions (the projects noted above) and their effectiveness;
- Congressionally mandated longitudinal study (FY 1985) to include research data on secondary education, transitional services, and post-school status of handicapped youth and young adults.

Together these initiatives have potential to seed local communities with innovative projects, promote evaluation and dissemination of information on program effectiveness, develop evaluation skills, and strengthen the research and data base for future activities. The institutes and longitudinal study should remedy deficiencies in information currently available to guide decisions and provide data for monitoring programs and assessing effectiveness.

The new policy also has implications for personnel preparation. In addition to providing funds for personnel training and recruitment, OSERS has spearheaded a drive to understand new bridge-building roles and to train people for them. In this vision, the ranks of special education teachers working in school settings will be supplemented by a cadre of job-coaches,

trainer-advocates and others who move comfortably across the school-agency-employment interface. The more hard-to-place a handicapped person is, the more extensive beome the job coaches' functions. These may include developing jobs, matching individuals to work tasks, providing behavior and skill training at job sites; working with clients, co-workers and employers to promote positive social and work interactions; monitoring progress on the job and making needed adjustments; communicating with clients, employers, social security and related programs; and planning transportation. In short, boundary-crossing personnel such as job coaches must know what it takes to get and keep a particular job, as contrasted with dealing in generalities about "the world of work."

Other Federal Action

Recent amendments to vocational education, rehabilitation and developmental disabilities (DD) legislation also embrace the employment objective. The 1977 amendments to the Developmental Disabilities Act, for example, include "employment services" as a priority for which DD funds may be used; and policy shifts in Vocational Rehabilitation support allocation of federal funds, matched by states, to provide services to handicapped students.

Significant changes in federal vocational education policy strongly support opportunities for handicapped youth. The Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (PL 98-524) legislated a comprehensive set of requirements tied to federal funding. Ten percent of federal funds (matched by states) is a "set aside" for "excess costs" essential to allowing handicapped people to participate in vocational education; and 100% of funds available for the handicapped must go directly to local programs. The state plan must assure compliance with criteria for services and activities: equal access of handicapped individuals to recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities; equal access to the full range of available programs; and provision of education in "the least restrictive environment."

Many are examining implications of the new act for resource allocation and programs. In Illinois, for example, a task force has been organized to implement PL 98-524. It has decided to inform all parents of eighth grade students about vocational education opportunities and to hold community meetings to explain the act and its implications for local districts.

While applauding policy changes at the national level, Harold Russell, Chairperson of the President's Commission on Employment of the Handicapped, has cautioned: "It takes more than laws on the books to achieve our objectives; it takes dedicated leadership, programs, support, and continuing hard work at the local level. . . The law does not solve the problem; it does give a track to run on."

It will be some time before we can judge the effects of these federal interventions and the impact of policy changes. It does indeed take more than legislation, dollars, and time-restricted projects to institutionalize improved programs and very much more to achieve the employment and independent living objectives, as the following agendas suggest. With the new track to run on, however, there is a positive climate and increased funding base to facilitate state and local action on transitional agendas. To these we now turn.

State-Level Agendas

The new national policy is a product both of enlightened leadership at the federal level and difficult battles won over the years by people working in states and communities. Social change of the type envisioned calls for effort from grassroots up, top down, and across all layers of our systems.

The major breakthrough in achieving handicapped children's rights to mainstream education ten years ago can be traced to community efforts and particularly parental advocacy. Parents took their cases to the courts and, through lawsuits in the early 1970's, pressured school systems to provide education for their children; schools, in turn, pressed states for help; and states went to Congress for federal aid which, since 1975, has been channelled through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. A decade later, a generation of youth who have been beneficiaries of those special education policies are graduating or aging-out of schools. To date the boldest initiatives to assure their transition to post-school life have come from the federal government. As one person put it, "States don't have to be in the vanguard; they just have to be in step." But are they? And what are the agendas for state action at this time? We consider first the importance of state leadership and then roles of specific agencies.

Agendas for State Leadership

For state legislators, commissioners and citizen boards, the first agenda item should be to promote statewide commitment to employment and independent living as goals for handicapped youth. Whether at the state or local level, whether in curriculum and instruction, or rehabilitation, or adult services, or employment, planning and action should be judged by these ends. The case for promoting employment and independent living is justified on research, economic, and political grounds, as well as equity. Demonstration projects have shown that even severely disabled people can find an employment niche given the proper training and opportunity. Programs that facilitate employment and independent living rather than stay-at-home options make good economic sense for taxpayers. And the goals are politically timely and viable: state action would be in step with national policy and concerns for effective use of public monies.

The second agenda item is for top-level state leadership to generate and support collaborative action. The challenge of designing strategies that are politically and administratively feasible is great. Alliances are needed to assure effective planning and action. Choices will have to be made between adapting existing planning strategies, administrative structures and communications channels to meet new goals and inventing new ones. Particular approaches and timing are likely to vary with state and local contexts.

Massachusetts, currently in the vanguard with legislated provision of transitional services, is an example of a state creating a new bureau for transition. In New York, Virginia, and elsewhere Governor's Task Forces are addressing the priority with a view to new legislative initiatives. Pennsylvania has created incentives for conversion of sheltered workshops to real-work-oriented centers and its Offices of Mental Retardation and Vocational Rehabilitation will fund proposals to demonstrate movement toward real and productive work rather than "make work."

These examples are in line with the goals of competitive work and independent living. Their focus is primarily on providing adult services to youth exiting the school system. However, the building of bridges between school and post-school life raises some larger issues of how "needs for services" are determined and where to locate authority and responsibility for service delivery.

How are needs for services defined by agencies and what definitions will prevail? Special education and vocational education have thus far travelled largely separate roads, deriving their mandates, funding, and regulation from different sources. As the site studies noted, efforts have been made in many communities to cross these medians. And, as our review of recent federal legislation has indicated, the 1984 amendments make vocational education an entity responsible for affirmatively recruiting handicapped students. We turn attention here to special education and rehabilitation as state organizations presently standing on opposite sides of the transition gulf.

Special education and rehabilitation, with historically different missions, use different definitions and procedures to determine need for services. As one interviewee put it: "These are two systems that talk different languages, use different diagnostic information, and whose goals are not necessarily the same for an individual." In rehabilitation, which focuses on adults and employability, "disabled" people are those with physical, mental, or emotional problems; a "handicapped" person is one whose disability interferes with vocational functioning. The definition is determined on the basis of comprehensive medical-type assessment. Special education, on the other hand, focuses on children and youth, employs a range of categories to distinguish among "handicapped" students for purposes of delivering educational services, and uses diagnostic procedures which are different from vocational rehabilitation standards.

In the sites we studied, from 34 to 77 percent of handicapped secondary students were classified as learning disabled (LD) in 1982-83. In special education LD is the fastest growing category nationally, although perceived by several interviewees as a catchall designation; on the other hand, vocational rehabilitation personnel speak of "true LD's", meaning those diagnosed by medical model comprehensive testing and having vocational handicaps. In short, schools would define as "handicapped" and in need of services many more youth than the adult service agencies. At the same time many handicapped persons who could meet vocational rehabilitation definitions still do not get the services they need once they leave school--sometimes because of failure of schools to make appropriate referrals to VR before students leave school, sometimes because of inadequate agency funding. "You can't build a bridge without a base on both sides of the divide!"

Some interviewees pondered: "If you look at the handicapped kids leaving schools, I wonder what the proportion is who really need adult services?" and "What about the ones who don't meet VR criteria?" Hence the critical questions: Who needs what kind of transitional services? And who decides which people will receive them?

Where should authority be lodged?

Our interviews suggest that no single agency believes transition is its responsibility. On the other hand, people argue that all have some responsibility. Most agree that designation of a single entity to coordinate transition is a necessity. While incentives for inter-agency collaboration may be few, proposals to give one agency the authority and resources raise hackles and questions of cost-effectiveness.

Here again, workable solutions are likely to vary in different contexts. Basic desiderata are a commitment to the mission, an understanding of both the education and adult services systems, and talent and track records in boundary crossing and coordination. Some argue that the appropriate location for transitional services authority is in the rehabilitation organization, others the education agency; some favor an independent entity within rehabilitation, still others recommend an authority independent of all agencies. Our study surfaced examples of options.

The Massachusetts legislation (Chapter 688) guarantees transition programs for handicapped people at age 22 so that they may enter employment and have supportive services. A Bureau of Transitional Planning created in the Department of Human Services is working with the first 500 student referrals for transitional planning into the adult and human services system. A written transitional plan assures agency collaboration to meet future service needs of every eligible student. The Bureau identifies gaps in services and initiatives to meet the needs of different aging-out populations. Chapter 688 is seen as a vehicle for educators, human service workers, advocates, and legislators to work jointly in behalf of disabled youth in Massachusetts.

Another approach, still in the proposal stage, defines the transition years as 16 to 24, spanning last years of school and first years post-school, and advocates vesting power in the education agency for school programs and subsequent follow-up. Zollers (1984), having analyzed the Pennsylvania context, argues that the best approach is not to form a new agency or develop an inter-agency cooperative agreement but to empower the education agencies to coordinate planning and services within the transition years. In this proposal schools, seen as the primary agency of preparation for work and independent living, would become part of a wider human services network. Counter arguments suggest that transition authority be lodged in the rehabilitation system because schools are already overburdened and education personnel are not trained in agency boundary crossing or case management.

Again, the arguments have to be examined in context. Rehabilitation is lodged in different agencies in different states: sometimes in education, sometimes labor, sometimes human services or social welfare. If an agency head bridges the education and adult services system, then a common mission may more readily be defined.

Some argue for an independent advocacy structure outside the arena of agency politics, perhaps using the governor's office as a base. Maine, for example, has an independent interagency coordinator legitimated by agencies though not decreed by government. Initiative for interagency cooperation came from rehabilitation in this case. Voluntary funding support of an independent coordinator by agencies is impelled both by state leadership expectations ("So long as we cooperate, it won't get legislated") and by pressures from strong grassroots advocacy groups.

Both agency organization and power politics provide the context in which choices are made. The essential leadership agenda is to generate a common sense of mission, funding, and a locus of authority for coordinating transition planning and services.

Agendas for Rehabilitation, Vocational Education, and Education

Absent overarching state leadership, specific questions can be addressed to state agencies with responsibilities for the issues under discussion: rehabilitation, mental retardation, vocational education, and education.

Rehabilitation is a federally-sponsored, state-administered program, grounded in federal law and policy and supplemented by state rules and administrative decisions. At the federal level the obvious relationship between special education and rehabilitation has been recognized to the extent that a reorganization placed the two under the same administrative unit. The major agenda question facing rehabilitation is: Will the state endorse a policy which allows counselors to expend resources on school-age youth, some of whom have not yet proved their need for rehabilitation in a vocational sense. Do state and regional managers actively encourage liaisons with the schools, the development of cooperative agreements, even the placement of vocational counselors right in the schools?

State departments of vocational education may want to place several questions on the agenda for improving vocational opportunities and facilitating the transition to jobs. These include: What priority should the state place on the vocational training of handicapped persons as compared with all other students? Would it be appropriate for state vocational education agencies,

with their own sources of funds, to support compensatory projects in area vocational programs? Can this agency exert leadership in overcoming some of the tensions that characterize the interface of vocational and special education? To what extent will it emphasize "real work" opportunities in preparing youth for competitive employment?

State departments of education and the special education bureaus within them also have potential for a major leadership role. They can set priorities for transitional services. They can emphasize independent living and competitive employment, making it clear that programs which do not prepare students for real work do not meet the appropriateness standards of PL 94-142. In short, their agenda should be to promote these goals through work in curriculum and personnel development and through collaborative planning.

State education agencies can provide tangible support by funding curriculum projects and disseminating state-of-the-art information. They can provide technical assistance to local education agencies. They can model cooperative agreements at the state level. Where there are companies with a strong statewide presence, SEA's can negotiate work experience contracts or contributions such as computers and staff training in their use.

Pre-service and in-service training are critical areas in which the SEA's could exercise leadership. They could support revision of pre-service certification requirements in ways that foster interdisciplinarity and boundary-crossing. For example, special education teachers for grades 9 to 12 could be certified separately and their training incorporate a requirement for pre-vocational and vocational programming; certification for vocational education and regular classroom teaching could require some minimum of courses in teaching the handicapped. Likewise, SEAs could give incentives for in-service staff development activities coordinated across disciplinary boundaries. And they could take the lead in promoting coordinated in-service for schools and adult service agency personnel to promote interagency communication.

State roles are clearly important in promoting transition goals, monitoring programs, disseminating improved practices, providing technical assistance and professional development, and modeling inter-agency collaboration; many of these areas parallel the federal initiative. Yet the primary locus of action lies in local communities such as those discussed in Part II. To that arena we now return.

Agendas at the Local Level

The local community is the most significant action arena because that is where handicapped youth seek to live and find work, where programs and services are delivered, and where schools, agencies and employers operate. In the local community people can give new policies life or let them wither on the vine through apathy, ineptitude or sheer inaction.

Promoting Commitment to Transition Goals

The extensive efforts projects placed on awareness and sensitivity demonstrate that expectations for handicapped youth are often low and based on assumptions rather than experience. This is the case with many people whose support is essential to promote transition from school to work--school personnel, parents, agency staff, employers and students themselves. The top agenda here, as at the state level, therefore is to foster commitment to the ultimate goals of employment and independent living. Programs, services, and collaborative planning are all servants of these purposes, not ends in themselves.

The following agenda items and questions are designed to stimulate discussion and ultimately local action. Our commentary serves to expand upon the questions or enrich the discussion, not to provide definitive answers.

Focus on the Student: Providing "Appropriate Education" in the "Least Restrictive Environment"

The legislated intent is for handicapped students to receive appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. The contemporary challenge is to translate that intent into an educational program which supports work and independence.

- How can the IEP process support school-to-work objectives?

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) required for all special education students provides a vehicle for setting objectives for employment and independent living, planning the means toward fulfilling these objectives, and monitoring the implementation of the plans to assure compliance.

The basic question for the IEP process is: What is appropriate for this particular young person, at this particular time, in order to move towards

employment and independent living? The more apparent it is that special services are needed to support transition, the more important it is to think in terms of an ITP, an Individual Transition Plan, and to involve appropriate agency personnel in developing that plan.

- When should transition objectives be introduced into the IEP?

Some advocate beginning transition in high school, others in junior high or middle school. In Maine, for example, it has been proposed that independent living issues be addressed no later than age 12 and vocational issues no later than age 14. Another perspective argues that education is a continuum in which vocational aspects are addressed in different ways over time. Appendix D illustrates a model for students with disabilities in which decreasing instructional support and increasing independence are promoted in the vocational development of students from elementary school through early adulthood.

- What is the appropriate balance between academic learning, vocational education, and independent living skills?

This question is not unique to special education. The balance between general and vocational education is a recurring debate both here and abroad. However, the question takes on greater import for handicapped students for whom employment prospects are relatively bleak.

Parent and professional advocates have labored to convince skeptics that handicapped children should be provided access to academic programs, and they are not ready to risk losing ground so painfully won. While supporting greater attention to employment, they may be wary of an earlier focus on vocational education at the expense of academics. At the same time the sad image of underemployed and stay-at-home graduates forces recognition that to leave vocational concerns to general "world of work" courses and to the end of high school, is to do too little too late for many youth.

What, then, should be the balance between academic, vocational and independent living skills? There is no easy answer. We have to attend to all three, assuring early and sustained planning for transition while avoiding premature closure of options. The IEP process offers the primary means of assuring appropriate direction, support, and experiences to achieve the individualized transition objectives.

Focus on the Family: Building Networks of Support

Our research suggests that more bridges need to be built between the school experience and the family/community life of handicapped students.

- How well does the IEP/ITP process take account of family and community characteristics?

Parental participation in the IEP process is mandatory, but sometimes less than meaningful. Students are frequently excluded, and distinctive features of the family and home community may be ignored. Yet the ability to use community and family resources is important to the post-school life of a handicapped young adult, and increasing involvement in decision-making about one's own life is a major part of social maturation.

Focus on School Personnel:
Building Bridges in the School System

- What kinds of in-service training are needed for school personnel, given the transition goals for students?

If schools are to build a strong base at their end of the transition bridge, they need to re-examine roles, functions, and relationships of all parties involved. New directions in special education, vocational education, and related service areas will generate demands and opportunities for teaming within schools and between schools and agencies and employers. There are no quick answers to what kind of in-service is appropriate. We can say, however, that all major parties should be involved in planning and implementing activities if handicapped youth are to be well served.

In-service training is an area open to locally designed initiatives. Activities might include:

- Workshops to increase awareness and sensitivity of administrators and teachers about transition issues and programs.

- Joint workshops involving special education, vocational education and general education professionals to improve in-school programs.

- Brainstorming across departmental lines about worksite training possibilities within the school system and the public sector generally.

- Joint workshops involving school and agency personnel to allow mutual education about the resources and constraints of each.

- Joint workshops involving teachers with employees/employers from work sites where handicapped people are employed or in training.

- On-the-job experience for teachers, working where handicapped persons are employed. Teachers need to know more about work settings, performance expectations, and student potential for filling jobs.

Such interfacing activities raise the questions: Will in-service credit be given for on-the-job experiences? Will SEA's and LEA's offer incentives to support creative initiatives in staff development? Could SEA's and LEA's require, as a condition of grant awards, that proposals be jointly submitted by the potential collaborating units?

Focus on the School System:
Organization, Resources, and Data

- How can potential organizational barriers to program improvement be removed or circumvented?

Within a school district and within individual schools, relationships among personnel with different specializations and responsibilities can be helped or hindered by organizational and administrative arrangements. To what extent does administration promote solid working relationships among special education, vocational education, and academic areas?

Does district leadership model patterns of collaborative planning inside the system and with employers that can support individual school efforts? While there are faculty boundary-crossers in many schools, their activities are likely to be more productive when there is explicit support from administration.

- How can regular high schools and vocational schools work together more effectively?

New federal legislation will open the doors of vocational education to increasing numbers of handicapped and disadvantaged students. Tensions

between high school and vocational schools, noted in Chapter 6, are not likely to dissipate without effort. Collaborative planning around issues raised by the new legislative initiative is essential to its success.

- Are there policies that create disincentives for serving or coordinating services for handicapped students?

The more diverse the resource base--schools, state and federal agencies--the greater the difficulty in integrating services. Shifts in federal priorities for vocational rehabilitation, incentives to students in certain categories to secure funding, mismatches in funding cycles, targeted populations in different agencies, all severely complicate efforts to mobilize resources for students. Policies that create perverse incentives become targets for local action if they stem from local administrative arrangements; they become candidates for change advocates when they emanate from the state level.

- How can the data base be improved?

During the course of the study we were frustrated about the difficulty in obtaining data. Some districts are unable to provide information on placement of students, particularly in vocational programs. Most districts have no data on students once they leave school. Schools argue that spending resources following people who are no longer their responsibility will detract resources from those who remain. Yet a rudimentary means of relating school efforts to post-school experience could be a valuable investment in improving programs.

School-Community Collaboration

Transition bridges cannot be strong without support from schools, service agencies, and employers. None may feel that responsibility for transition lies with them. The question remains:

- At the local level, who will assure that each individual student has the best chance of finding a job and living independently as soon out of school as possible?

While there is no easy answer, it is important that the question be faced, initially at least, within the school. Some may choose to work through the IEP process, actively involving community agencies and employers on a

case-by-case basis. Some may try for cooperative agreements whereby major agencies and employers develop formalized documents specifying the conditions under which they will work together. Some may wish to use employment counselors and job developers to negotiate in the community for services and jobs. Others may wish merely to refer students earlier to multi-service agencies like state rehabilitation so that they can handle the community linkages. And some may choose a collaborative planning process where agency and employer representatives meet with school personnel to build improvements in programs, communication, and service delivery.

This last approach, collaborative action planning, holds most promise for sustained attention to program improvement and to the transition from school to jobs and independence. Strategies that emerge from the process can be inventive and responsive to changing circumstances in local communities. For the process to work well, involvement of schools with community representatives should be regular rather than sporadic; and it should begin early in secondary schooling rather than focus exclusively on the point of graduation or aging-out.

Who is responsible for transition? Schools, agencies and businesses, as organizations, may have difficulty with that question. But within every organization there are people ready to take the initiative. For such people our account of experience in collaborative planning projects and discussion of programs and agendas may prove helpful.

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Slide-Tape Presentations
on the six collaborative projects

In the six months following the one-year-collaboration projects, each site produced a slide-tape presentation on the collaborative process as a required final product. These slide-tapes were distributed to states by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Appendix A

A Brief History of Legislation

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 – While providing little money or resources, this law states that vocational education services should be available to "persons who have academic, socioeconomic, or other handicaps which prevent them from succeeding in the regular vocational education program." (PL 88-210)

The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 – This law separates special needs learners into the categories of disadvantaged and handicapped not for programmatic but for funding purposes. It allocates federal funds to states using at least 10 percent of their basic vocational funds for the handicapped and 15 percent for the disadvantaged. Funds can be used for curriculum development, educational services to assist special needs students to succeed in vocational education, and recruitment of employers, among other things. (PL 90-576)

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 – A hallmark piece of legislation applying to all handicapped persons between the ages of 3 and 21, unless specified otherwise in state statute, the law requires schools to provide an education designed to meet the needs and abilities of these students through a) a free, appropriate public education; b) an individual education program; c) access to records; d) due process guarantees; e) placement in the least restrictive environment; and f) non-discriminatory testing. (PL 94-142)

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Sections 503 and 504) – This law requires employers receiving federal contracts to recruit, hire, train and advance handicapped people and make a "reasonable accommodation" in the work environment to meet their needs. Section 504, passed in 1977, guarantees basic civil rights to handicapped people; they cannot be denied access to private or public activities supported by federal money including public secondary and postsecondary facilities. (PL 93-112)

The Education Amendments of 1976, Title II – Similar to the above, this act emphasizes the need to prepare all students, including handicapped and disadvantaged, for employment by assuring equal access to programs and services. To meet the least restrictive environment test, handicapped students must be educated in regular vocational programs to the extent possible. Moreover, the 1976 Amendments modify the existing definitions of vocational education to the following: organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment. (PL 94-482)

The EHA Amendments of 1983, Section 626 – This legislation creates a new authority for "Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Handicapped Youth." The major objectives of the authority are to stimulate improvement and development of programs for secondary special education and strengthen and coordinate education, training and related services for handicapped youth to aid the process of transition to postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive employment, continuing education, or adult services. (PL 98-199)

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 – This act legislates a comprehensive set of requirements tied to federal funding setting aside 10 percent of federal funds (matched by states) to be used exclusively for "excess costs" essential to allowing handicapped people to participate in vocational education; 100 percent of the funds available must go directly to local programs. The state plan must assure compliance with criteria for services and activities; equal access of handicapped individuals in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities; equal access to the full range of available programs; and provision of education in "the least restrictive environment." (PL 98-524)

Appendix B

Selected Program Improvement Strategies Involving School–Employer Collaboration

A. The need to develop more realistic employment and training sites directly within industry to facilitate the overall career development of special education youth.

1. Develop realistic and representative information from which to make decisions. Use employers in all planning and develop an approach consistent with industries needs.
2. Enlist cooperation of various levels of industry suited to particular objectives for implementation. "Who you approach in industry depends on the purpose of the contact."
   * Programs – executive level
   * Jobs – personnel
   * Funding – community affairs
   * Unions, manufacturing and purchasing may also be important in training, hiring.
3. A generalization: In accessing industry, start as high up in the executive order (president, vice-president) as possible. If interested he/she will see that the communication reaches the appropriate people within the organization to initiate the program. Need to consider the general principles of organizational development in negotiating programs with industry.
4. Target particular businesses or industries to narrow the field. Work selectively within one industry to initiate program. Start small to insure success and expand efforts.

B. The need for public schools to develop specific processes for working directly within industry.

1. Develop multiple programming options directly within industry to include short-term job shadowing, vocational training, as well as employment opportunities.
2. Develop a prototype model of a formal cooperative agreement that could be used in working with industry.
3. Identify materials on inter-organizational processes and apply to specific situations. The need for further research efforts in this area is critical.
4. Consider utilizing company service areas such as food service, maintenance, etc., for placements in addition to regular on-line positions.
5. Research companies prior to contact so informative choices can be made and the prospective plan can be directly tailored to the industries' needs. "What are the real incentives for industry?" Should we assume that tax credits, subminimum wage certifications and subsidized employment are real incentives? We should work more closely with industry to discuss the potential benefits hiring handicapped persons will have on reducing job turnover. Develop success stories.

C. The need for the public school in conjunction with industry to explore alternative staffing arrangements to facilitate industry-based vocational training and employment opportunities for handicapped youth.

1. Place special education teacher who has a vocational background directly in industry to serve as on-site trainer or job coach for students.
2. Use educational assistants and/or technical tutors instead of teachers in industry. Teacher could provide coordination of the educational assistants and tutors in lieu of the direct training.
3. A job description should be developed to identify the specific role requirements of potential trainers in industry. A job analysis should be conducted to interpret what industry would require of the individual. This information could be used in staff development programs to train potential industry-based trainers for the future.
4. The cooperation of the school board must be obtained. The industry trainer concept deviates from traditional education roles and must be approved by school board members. Policy development may have to be initiated to achieve this objective.

D. The need for the public schools and industry to mutually explore the development of a technical assistance approach/ package for employers.

1. Survey employers to determine their needs regarding the level of technical assistance required to train and employ the handicapped.
2. Staff development for district vocational services personnel is needed to better train these individuals to facilitate the training and placement of handicapped students in industry.
3. Information should be provided for specific purposes. These areas of technical assistance may relate to:
   a. Knowledge – provide information on employment incentives and success stories of handicapped workers.
   b. Attitude – provide information to reduce possible stereotyped perceptions of handicapped workers by employers.
   c. Behavior (individual and group) – provide information to change behavior in employer willingness to employ the handicapped.
   d. Compile a series of success stories where handicapped individuals are depicted as successful workers.
   e. Communication – develop a better communication system to inform employers of the students' abilities, interests and special needs related to the job the individual is seeking.

E The need for existing school curriculum to be re-evaluated to more directly reflect employer needs and concerns using industry representatives to provide direct input.

1. Develop a special purpose task force comprised of business, industry and local school staff to review and modify special education curriculums to better prepare students for the world of work.
2. Involve the district curriculum planning department in all discussions and revisions of special education curriculums and keep the school board aware of the needs for change.
3. Establish a speakers' bureau of local business and industry representatives to provide reality-based information on employment directly in the special education classroom.
4. Seek school board approval and backing of major projects.
5. Establish job shadowing program in industry for handicapped students.

Source: St. Paul Public Schools, Project PROVE. **A Planning Guide to Increase Community Participation in Improving Vocational Education Programs for Handicapped Youth.** St. Paul, MN, (circa 1983). pp. 83-95.

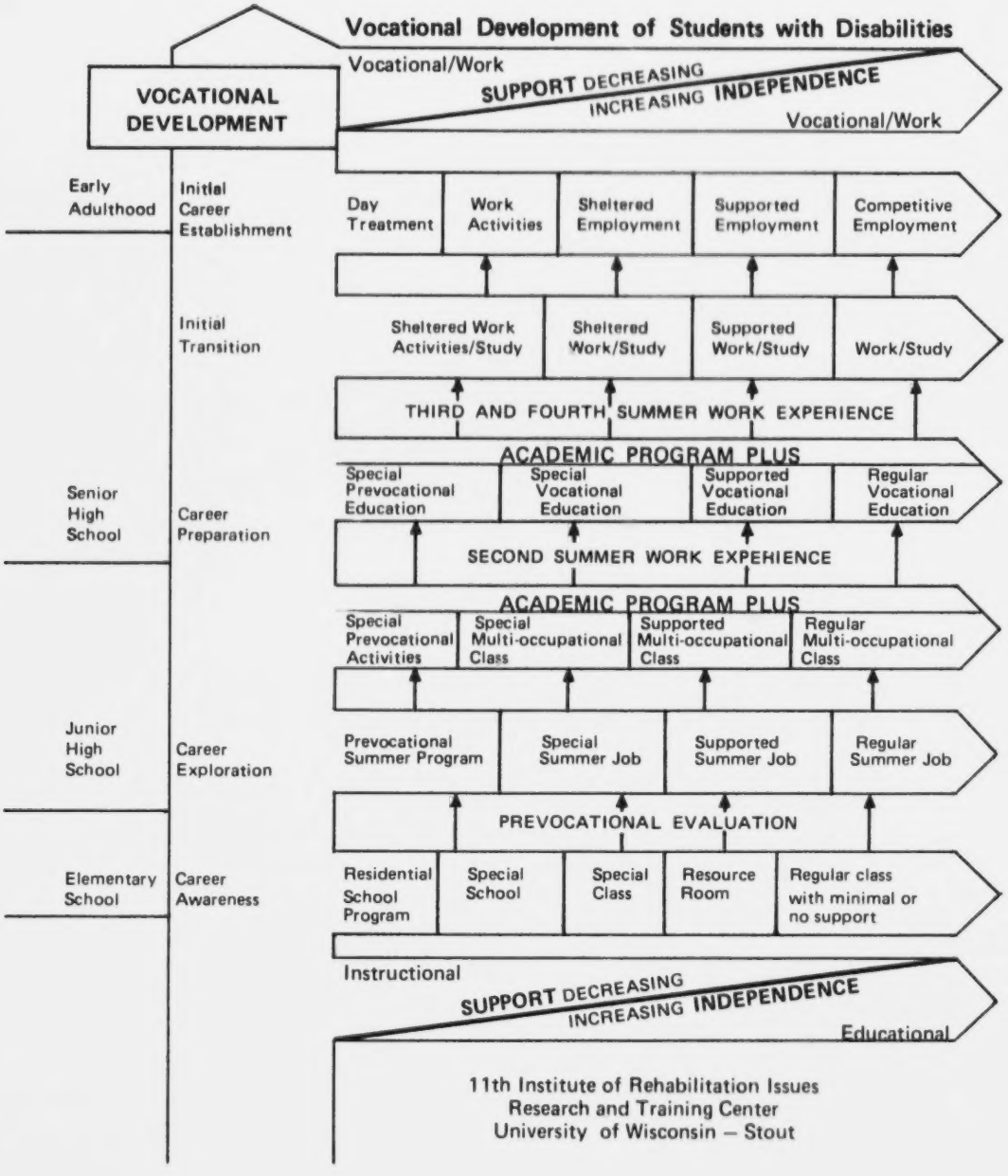
Appendix C

Opportunities for Transitional Projects *

Objectives:	1. To strengthen and coordinate education, training, and related services for handicapped youth to assist in the transitional process to postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive employment, continuing education, or adult services; and 2. Stimulate improvement and development of programs for secondary special education.
Projects:	Projects that can be assisted under this section include: 1. Developing strategies and techniques for transition to independent living, vocational training, post-secondary education, competitive employment for handicapped youth; 2. Establishing demonstration models for services and programs which emphasize vocational training, transitional services, and placement of handicapped youth; 3. Conducting demographic studies which provide information on numbers, age levels, types of handicapping conditions, and services required for handicapped youth in need of transitional programs; 4. Specially designed vocational programs to increase the potential for competitive employment for handicapped youth; 5. Research and Demonstration projects for exemplary service delivery models and replication and dissemination of successful models; 6. Initiating cooperative models between education agencies and adult services agencies, including vocational rehabilitation, mental health, mental retardation, public employment, and employers, which facilitate the planning and development of transitional services of handicapped youth to post-secondary education, vocational training, employment, continuing education, and adult services; and 7. Developing appropriate procedures for evaluating vocational training, placement, and training services for handicapped youth.
Applicants:	The Secretary is authorized to make grants and contracts with: 1. State Education Agencies 2. Local Education Agencies 3. Public and private nonprofit institutions including state job training coordinating councils and service delivery area administrative entities established under JTPA (P.L. 97–300).

* Authorized under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act as amended by P.L. 98–199, December 1983, Section 626: Secondary Education and Transition Services for Handicapped Youth.

Appendix D


Vocational Development of Students with Disabilities
VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Vocational/Work
SUPPORT DECREASING
INCREASING INDEPENDENCE
Vocational/Work
Early Adulthood
Initial Career Establishment
Day Treatment
Work Activities
Sheltered Employment
Supported Employment
Competitive Employment
Initial Transition
Sheltered Work Activities/Study
Sheltered Work/Study
Supported Work/Study
Work/Study
THIRD AND FOURTH SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE
ACADEMIC PROGRAM PLUS
Senior High School
Career Preparation
Special Prevocational Education
Special Vocational Education
Supported Vocational Education
Regular Vocational Education
SECOND SUMMER WORK EXPEHIENCE
ACADEMIC PROGRAM PLUS
Special Prevocational Activities
Special Multi-occupational Class
Supported Multi-occupational Class
Regular Multi-occupational Class
Junior High School
Career Exploration
Prevocational Summer Program
Special Summer Job
Supported Summer Job
Regular Summer Job
PREVOCATIONAL EVALUATION
Elementary School
Career Awareness
Residential School Program
Special School
Special Class
Resource Room
Regular class with minimal or no support
Instructional
SUPPORT DECREASING
INCREASING INDEPENDENCE
Educational
11th Institute of Rehabilitation Issues
Research and Training Center
University of Wisconsin – Stout

Appendix E

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS YOU MAY CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:

Chester County Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania

Director of Special Education
Chester County Intermediate Unit # 24
1530 E. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, Pennsylvania 19320

Decatur, Illinois **Project EXPAND**

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Department of Special Education
Decatur Public Schools
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